ELIJAH THE PROPHET

J. BUNYAN LEMON

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A Dream of the Christ

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BY

J. BUNYAN LEMON

"Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things."—MATT. xvii. 11.

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Preface

"And dreams, in their development, have breath,
And tears and tortures, and the touch of joy;
They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts.
They make us what we were not—what they will,
And shake us with the vision that's gone by."

—Byron.

Mysterious and significant is the relation between the lives of our Lord Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, and Elijah the prophet. If we could know precisely what this relation was and is, we would have the key to the right interpretation of all history and prophecy.

We believe that there is no view of the life of Jesus so fascinating, and so productive of lofty spritual impulses, as that which we get from the standpoint of Elijah the prophet. It was Elijah who talked with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was in the spirit and power of Elijah that John the Baptist was sent forth to baptize Jesus, to see in Him the "Lamb of God," to identify Him as the Messiah, and to call the Jewish nation to repentance.

The Mohammedans believe that Elijah is still on earth and that he dwells in the caves of Palestine. The Jews believe that he is either yet on earth, or will one day return to the earth, and that he will restore them to their inheritance in

Jacob. Malachi prophesied that Elijah would return to the earth before the final judgment. Jesus was asked about that prophecy and affirmed, "Elijah indeed cometh and shall restore all things." In the days of Augustine, it was the universal belief among all Christians that Elijah is yet to appear in the earth, before our Lord Jesus comes to raise the dead.

In this Dream, the reader is brought into companionship with this great and strange Elijah, the Tishbite. Into this prophet's home we enter, and see visions of the Christ-life and of the whole Messianic reign. Many new and strange suggestions will arise in the mind of the thoughtful reader, as he ponders these pages. To enable such readers to search for themselves and easily find the foundation in Scripture, history, and tradition on which this story rests, we have, by means of figures, made reference to numerous foot-notes.

The author desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to his friends, Messrs. Willard D. Chamberlin and Edward B. Solomon, of Dayton, Ohio, for the valuable counsel and assistance they have given him in the publication of this work.

J. B. L.

Willimantic, Conn., August 1, 1899.

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Elijah the Prophet: A Dream of the Christ

Introductory

I

IN THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH

In my dream I stood in the field of Machpelah, and gazed upon the dark, grey walls of a quadrangular building two hundred feet long, one hundred and fifteen feet wide, and sixty feet high. The character of its masonry was antique, and its glory and strength reminded me of the olden days when Hiram, king of Tyre, sent unto Solomon cunning mechanics, skillful to work in stone, iron, silver and gold. No windows or openings of any description were in this building, except two small entrances at the southeast and southwest corners. Observing this, I thought of sepulchres and Moslem sanctuaries. This venerable structure, with its hoary, grey color and archaic forms of masonry, and from its position

near the crest of the hill, when gilded over with the golden light of the rising sun, gave dignity to the meaner buildings which, at the time of my dream, made up the little city of Hebron, where once David reigned over Judah.

It was the hour of prayer. It was not supposed that a stranger was near the gates of the sacred tomb when the official guards, leaving the doors unbolted for a few careless moments, withdrew for their morning worship. Seeing this opportunity, I hastily entered, excusing myself on the grounds that if these are the graves of my own forefathers, no one has the divine right to deny me entrance.

On the right hand side of the inner portico, before entering the main building, I found the shrine of Abraham, which I entered through a silver gate.[1] In the corner of this shrine, I found a small opening into the large cave which Abraham bought of the children of Heth for a burial-place.[2] It was here where he buried Sarah his wife and here also was he laid to rest. Isaac was buried here with Rebekah his wife. To this sacred place was the body of Jacob brought all the way from Egypt at his dying request.[3] No other place on earth is held in such high esteem as the cave of Machpelah.

I felt like one lost to this world and forever locked in the mysterious corridors of the departed spirits when, in the darkness of that cave,

[1] Smith's Dict. Bible, Art. Machpelah.
[2] Gen. xxiii. 17. [3] Gen. xlix. 30.

lighted only by the faint glimmer of the candles at the shrine beyond the aperture, I began to feel my way among the bones of the most honored and reverenced men of all the generations. Presently I saw, some fifty feet eastward to my right, a dim phosphorescent light, and immediately I thought of the stories I had heard in my boyhood days, when ghosts were supposed to haunt the graveyards. And I trembled with exceeding fear. But when I remembered that for all these centuries no man had ever been permitted to tread in these sacred vaults and to learn the secrets which might here be revealed,[1] my courage came back, reinforced by an ambitious desire to thrill the world with the results of my daring search, or else perish in this hallowed place and be buried with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Cautiously I drew near and peered through a small opening into a room lighted up with an indescribable glory, such as no light of the sun or moon or candle could ever produce. And seated in that room, pondering over a small parchment, I saw a man whose face was like that of a Jewish priest I had met in Jerusalem the day before. But his dress was like unto that of one of the prophets of the days of Ahab, king of Israel. The hair of his head was long and black. His beard was the perfection of natural beauty. His eyes were like flashes of lightning, uncompromising and fierce, so that I verily believe that if

[1] Smith's Dict. Bible, Art. Machpelah.

King Ahaziah had sent me as captain of his fifty choicest soldiers,[1] I would have dared neither to lay hands on him nor to invoke the terror of his wrath.

Presently I observed his entire expression change, evidently because of what he was reading. His eyes now became as soft as love. In fact, he was now beginning to weep over some sentence he had read, or some picture he had seen, in that little parchment. And his gentleness was more astonishing to me now than the heroic flashes of his indignation a few moments before. As he now appeared, not even the unprotected widow of Sarepta[2] would have hesitated to entertain in her own home a stranger so manifestly harmless.

I was about to speak to him, when I perceived that he was reading the last paragraph. I therefore waited for him to finish. But before I could realize that he had reached the end, he quickly rolled up the parchment, sealed it, and started toward me. Then was I terribly frightened, as though I had seen a spirit, and I fell backward to the ground. But as I fell, I perceived that he laid the book in the cleft of the rock beside the door and withdrew.

When I recovered, I peered through the door once again, and saw him in a deep sleep at the other end of the room. Then was I tempted to seize that book and make good my escape. No greater ambition could any man have than to find

[1] 2 Kings i. 9. [2] 1 Kings xvii. 9.

some such inspired record to throw light on the mysterious portions of the Old and New Testaments. This was my opportunity—the opportunity of a lifetime—an opportunity in search of which thousands of consecrated men have visited Palestine, where the very hills and valleys, brooks and fountains, gardens and sepulchres testify of Jesus; but where the Christian is not allowed to enter the sacred enclosures, nor to dig out the hidden treasures that belong to the commonwealth of the world. How else could such a treasure be taken from Palestine except by stealing it? Is it wrong to do evil that good may come?[1] As I put forth my hand, I remembered those words of Saint Paul, and turned away from the temptation.

Proceeding on into the darkness, I wondered if what I had seen might not, after all, be simply a secret resting-place for some modern Jewish Rabbi, whose good fortune had obtained for him a private entrance into these sacred enclosures, all unknown to the ignorant Mohammedans who have thought to guard every historic place with a standing army. The priest, whom I had seen in Jerusalem the day before, might well be the brother of this man. Could I but find such an opening, what a discovery that would be! But should I fail to find it—then what? It would be better to die in this hallowed place, than to meet death at the hands of the guard at the door of the sepulchre. I felt my blood run cold as I realized

[1] Rom. iii. 8.

that this was a matter of life or death. Finally I reasoned as a philosopher, that there must be an opening somewhere, else the atmosphere itself would choke me.

For hours I wandered about in the dark, and wept bitterly as I remembered home and friends. I imagined that I felt a breeze, almost imperceptibly soft though it was, and I concentrated all my energies toward tracing it to its source. Around sharp curves and up long flights of winding stairs, I felt my way in the darkness for seemingly many miles, when lo, I saw once more in the distance a ray of light from the outside world, and the blue sky never before seemed so dear to me. I found myself at the mouth of a cave in the mountains of Horeb, in the wilderness of Judea. And while I marked the place for future identification, I unconsciously listened for the still small voice of former years which said,

"What doest thou here, Elijah?"[1]

[1] 1 Kings xix. 9.

II

IN THE WILDERNESS OF JUDEA

IMMEDIATELY I set my face northward, through the wilderness of Judea, to find my way to Jerusalem. And I was half-way through my journey when, as I passed into a deep and shady ravine, I saw upon the hillside a man sitting on a great stone in the attitude of silent prayer. At the noise of my footsteps, he lifted his head and I perceived a face like that I had seen in the cave. His garments had been changed somewhat, for his raiment now was of camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins.[1]

"Blessed be thou of the Lord, Rabbi," was the salutation with which I greeted him in the Hebrew tongue.

"Peace be unto thee," was his reply.

"Canst thou tell me the way to Jerusalem, thou Prophet of the Most High God?" I queried, as I drew near to him.

"There are two Jerusalems. To which of them dost thou wish to go?" he asked.

"To both of them, good sir," I replied. "For I perceive that thou speakest of the Jerusalem on high. And indeed I would rather know the way to the one in heaven than to the one on earth."

[1] Matt. iii. 4.

"Canst thou speak Greek?" he asked, as I sat down at his feet.

"Art thou a Greek, good Rabbi? I trow not. Did I not see a near relative of thine among the priests of Jerusalem a few days ago? And did I not see thee in the cave reading a parchment in the Hebrew language? I know thee by thy long raven locks and by thy beard. Thou hast the countenance of a Hebrew prophet, even of a Nazarite.[1] Where dwellest thou?"

"This wilderness is my home and all the caves of these mountain sides are my mansions,[2] yet never have I seen thee near my lodgings, neither have I had a relative among the priests of Jerusalem for more than a thousand years.[3] Thou speakest as one beside thyself or as one wrapped in a dream. And yet I know full well, through experiences I dare not relate, how angels keep vigils over these sacred hills and dales.[4] What hast thou seen and where? And on what errand art thou sent?"

"I have seen thee, Rabbi, or else a man very like unto thee, except perhaps he was thy senior. He dwelt in a room lighted by the glory of the divine effulgence, in the cave of Machpelah, near the hallowed resting-place of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was reading a parchment which, as he neared the end, caused his eyes to flash forth vengeance as the lightning, and his countenance to become exceedingly fierce. But suddenly a great change came over him. His eyes

[1] Num. vi. 1–5. [2] Luke i. 80. [3] Luke i. 5. [4] John i. 33.

were filled with tears, and his face was transfigured with love and joy. When he had finished the book, he sealed it instantly as if by magic, then placed it in the cleft of the rock, and lay down in peaceful sleep.

"My errand in this Holy Land is to find some parchment or inscription which will reveal to an anxious world the secrets of the child-life of my Lord.[1] And I fancy that in that book there is a treasure which the world would give much to possess. My temptation to seize it by stealth put my honesty to a thorough test."

"It is well for thee, my son, that thou didst not put forth thine hand to wrong that holy man of God. For thou mightest have been suddenly smitten with Uzza's terrible death.[2] From what thou hast said, I judge that thou hast seen Elijah the prophet, for he is yet in the flesh. He hath never seen death. The Lord God took him in a chariot of fire, and no man hath found the place of his abode. The sons of the prophets near Jericho were informed of his approaching departure. And after he was taken, fifty of them searched three days through all the region round about, if haply they might find him.[3] But they found him not. I have wondered if it may not be true that the same authority which foretold his departure,[4] intimated to them also that his permanent dwelling-place would not be far from the scene of his exaltation. I have searched every cave in all this wilderness, in the hope of finding some trace of

[1] John xxi. 25. [2] 2 Sam. vi. 7. [3] 2 Kings ii. 11–18. [4] 2 Kings ii. 5.

his footsteps; for I have read that when he was in Samaria, he hid himself from Ahab, king of Israel, for three years and six months. The king sent detectives into all countries to search him out, but they found him not;[1] for lo, he was close by the king's palace. We also, like Ahab, imagine that Elijah is in a distant world, when in reality he may be very near to our abode, and fully conscious of what the elect are doing."

"Rabbi, now dost thou speak as one beside thyself. Who art thou?"

"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.'[2] Thou dost seek diligently to know the secrets of the child-life of thy Saviour; but it would profit thee vastly more to learn the secret of how to recognize Him in the multitude of grown up men and women, as He mingleth with them in their daily life. I have heard it here in the wilderness from the lips of angels, as they whispered one to another in the twilight hour, that upon whomsoever the Spirit of God descendeth and remaineth,[3] the same is He who is sent into the world to save the people. I am beginning to feel that it is more important to find and to know the Lord God of Elijah, than it is to find Elijah himself,[4] or than to hold communion with departed spirits, or sainted spirits still in the flesh, like the one thou didst see in the cave. I will seek him no longer. I will give up the search as Elisha did, and, like him, I will go

[1] 1 Kings xviii. 10. [2] John i. 23. [3] John i. 33. [4] 2 Kings ii. 14.

down to the waters of Jordan,[1] and strike the waves thereof with this mantle of mine, and exclaim, Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

When he had said this I realized that I was face to face with John the Baptist, or with one who was impersonating him, and whose identity with the man I had seen in the cave might be more real than was apparent.[2] I had often boasted of my ability to understand mysteries, but here was a problem such as I had never met before. A man of the twentieth century in conversation with a man of the first; and both of them apparently ignorant of the generation in which the other lived. Such a thing might be in heaven, if the departed spirits know nothing of what transpires on earth after their departure.[3] But even then they would surely know that Christ had come, that He was crucified, that He rose again from the dead; else how can they intelligently worship the Lamb that was slain? While I pondered thus in silent meditation, the prophet spoke:

"Hast thou heard of the three wise men,[4] who came from the east to worship the King of the Jews?[5] How they came to Herod and explained that a star in the heavens had led them to seek the Christ? Hast thou considered them and the marvellous record which they made? Why should I be thought wild or beside myself if I should boldly assert that these three wise men

[1] Mark i. 5. [2] Luke i. 17. [3] Rev. vi. 9–11.
[4] Supposed to be three because they offered only three gifts.
[5] Matt. ii. 1–18.

were Enoch,[1] Melchizedek[2] and Elijah, all of whom have never seen death, and all of whom live to-day, either in some secret place upon this earth, or in some near-by planet, or in some unknown realm, awaiting their opportunity to render some additional service to the Most High God? How else could the wise men know the language of the stars and so easily and noiselessly get into and out of Judea? Why did the king tremble and all Jerusalem become excited, and yet allow them to depart without a record of their names or the countries they represented? How did they so mysteriously disappear, and conceal the Christ-child? The man whom thou didst see in the cave may perchance be one of them; for this land which God gave to Abraham and to his seed forever, is full of secrets underneath its soil, while every murmuring stream is haunted with the histories of the past, and every desert place with prophecies of the future."

"Rabbi, art thou sure that the record of this visit was not duly made and afterward destroyed? Or perchance forwarded to Rome and delivered into the custody of Tiberius Cæsar?" I asked.

"It was Augustus Cæsar,"[3] he replied, "who was Emperor of the Roman Empire in the days of which thou speakest. Thou dost not seem to know well the history of these years. And without this knowledge, no man can understand the secrets of the child-life of the Lord. Gold is not found on the earth's surface nor in

[1] Heb. xi. 5. [2] Heb. vii. 1–4. [3] Luke ii. 1.

great quantities per cubic span. If thou wouldst obtain precious metal, thou must dig deep and wide. The genealogies of the Jews were the only records that Herod destroyed.[1] And what further need had the world for them after the Christ had come? If thou wilt go with me into yonder cave, I will show thee the records which Zacharias the priest prepared. He was in a position to know the inside history of many religious and political situations during his long lifetime of fourscore years and ten."

"Blessed be thou of the Lord, Rabbi; thy servant will go with thee whithersoever thou shalt lead, if only thou wilt reveal to him some of these secrets which his soul longeth to know. For as the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after God."[2]

"Thou shalt promise me first that when thou hast gone on thy way, thou wilt tell no man where my dwelling-place is; only thou mayest say that it is in the wilderness of Judea."

"The Lord judge between me and thee, Rabbi, if I prove unfaithful to the confidence thou dost repose in me."

"Then place thine hand in mine, my son, and I will lead thee through the darkness into the light of a room where my lamp is always burning and where I make my home."

[1] Smith's Dict. Bible, Art. Herod. [2] Ps. xlii. 1.

III

IN THE MOUNTAINS OF HOREB

I IMAGINED I would recognize the room and the parchment also; but these were very different from the ones I had seen in the cave of Machpelah. The dirt floor was covered with rugs of sheepskin, goatskin, and crude formations of camel's hair. The room was large, dry and pleasant, and appeared as though it had been carved out of the solid rock by the cave dwellers of prehistoric times. The lamp was like unto the one described in the Holy Place of Solomon's temple with its seven golden branches and bowls.[1] The manuscript was made up of numerous bits of parchment, unequal in size and quality, but purporting to be memoranda kept by Zacharias[2] the priest for the purpose of handing down to posterity certain important events in the history of his life and nation.

"Dost thou know Greek?" queried my host, as with snapping eye he reminded me of the question asked when first I sat at his feet, and which I had forgotten to answer.

"I have studied Greek for years, Rabbi," I replied, "and my learned professor certifies that I am abundantly able to teach it to others. But I confess unto thee, in the obscurity of this abode,

[1] Ex. xxv. 31–37. [2] Luke i. 5.

that I cannot read this manuscript without thine aid. It appears to have been written by the trembling hand of a very aged and unlearned man."

"Unlearned in letters, my son, but say not unlearned in aught else. There is an education too high for the schools to reach, wherein the mind, unaided by human device or training, layeth hold on the thoughts of God and, being energized by the Holy Ghost, expandeth by the laws of nature. A startled world calleth it genius, and classifieth it as a gift, because the human intellect cannot explain it nor attain unto it apart from the immanence of God. Zacharias was a man of wisdom of the highest order, else it could never have been said of him and of his wife, Elisabeth, that they lived together all the days of their many years blameless in the sight of God.[1] Thou dost well if with all thy learning, thou art able to translate thy theories into such practice as was his—what ailest thee, my son?"

"Rabbi, didst thou see that face which this very moment looked in on us through that door? It was like the face of the priest I saw in Jerusalem. He vanished out of sight when he saw me, just as though he were a spirit repelled from seeking thy company because of my presence. What doth this mean? Perchance some one has found us here as I found the man of Machpelah!"

"Fear not, my son. Stay thou here and I will search and see."

[1] Luke i. 6.

"As the Lord liveth, Rabbi, I will not suffer thee to leave me. For dost thou not remember how Elisha would not leave Elijah lest by so doing he lose the blessing which he sought?[1] Neither do I forget how Obadiah refused to leave Elijah, giving as his reason therefor these mysterious words: 'It shall come to pass as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not.'"[2]

The Rabbi understood and smiled. And under the benediction of those expressive dark eyes, my soul that moment experienced such a sensation as Archimedes may have felt when he rushed forth into the street shouting the discovery that immortalized his name. I fixed my eyes intently upon my strange host. And without a word more, he picked up a bit of parchment and began to read.

"I, Zacharias the priest, was born in Jerusalem in the year of Rome 679, which was the first year of the third Mithrodatic war. I was nine years old when Julius Cæsar made his first public appearance. In my twelfth year Pompey, having reduced Syria to a Roman province, set his battering rams against the walls of Jerusalem, conquered the city and stood triumphant in the porch of the temple. From this time until I was forty years old, Jerusalem was afflicted with incessant wars, tumults and troubles. For this reason my education was grievously neglected. But in the streets, I heard of Cicero's orations

[1] 2 Kings ii. 6, 10. [2] 1 Kings xviii. 12.

against Cataline, and of the imperial majesty of Julius Cæsar, who waxed greater and greater until our dreams were suddenly ended by his assassination at the hands of Brutus. On the day that Julius Cæsar became dictator of the Roman Republic, I was married to Elisabeth of Hebron the daughter of Levi; and at our marriage, her kinsman, Judah of Bethlehem, was ruler of the feast. Three months afterward Anna, the daughter of Judah, was married to Joachim of Nazareth."

As he laid down this bit of parchment to take up another, he queried:

"Dost thou understand, my son, who this Joachim of Nazareth was?"

"Yes, he was the father of Mary, the mother of my Lord.[1] And Anna, the daughter of Judah was her mother. It is said that they died soon afterward, leaving Mary and her older sister, Salome, in poverty, and that these children were cared for by relatives. Hast thou in that parchment a record of this?"

"Thou hast naught but wild tradition, my son. Listen to me and thou shalt know history."

And he continued reading:

"I lived in Jerusalem until Herod, the Great, came against it, in the seventh year after Cæsar's assassination.[2] Herod was appointed king of the Jews three years before the people allowed him to enter the city.[3] When at last he did get in,

[1] Smith's Dict. Bible, Art. Mary the Virgin.
[2] Joseph, Ant. xiv., 16, 4.
[3] Joseph, Ant. xiv., 14, 5.

the soldiers took everything by storm and a horrible massacre followed, in which both Elisabeth and I lost many of our dearest friends.[1] I was at that time an officiating priest in the temple, and would doubtless have lost my life too had not Herod himself stood in the doorway of the temple with a drawn sword, threatening death to the Roman who should first attempt to enter that sacred place.[2]

"It was understood by all of us who had knowledge of public affairs that Herod owed his promotion to Mark Antony and Cleopatra.[3] Rumors concerning the private life of these two profligates were such as to make all Jerusalem ashamed of having fallen into their power. Even the administration of the religious ordinances of the temple was henceforth subject to their direction. But when Cleopatra, with a great parade of wealth and power, entered our city to visit Herod, we were all greatly alarmed. We fasted and prayed that God would not allow her to violate our sepulchres and pollute our temple in her profane search for precious gems.[4] Herod frequently tortured some of our dearest personal friends on slight pretexts and false charges, deprived them of their possessions, cast them into prison; and occasionally some were slain. These things kept Elisabeth so wrought up with excitement that we decided to move out of the nervous city and make our home in the quiet hill-country

[1] Joseph, Ant. xiv., 16, 2.
[2] Smith's Dict. Bible, Art. Jerusalem.
[3] Josephus' Wars, i., 18, 5.
[4] Joseph, Ant. xv., 4, 1.

of the south. Five years after we moved to Jutta, the great battle of Actium was fought. This was followed quickly by the suicides of Antony and Cleopatra and the establishment of the Roman Empire.[1]

"From a careful study of the Scriptures in my quiet home at Jutta, I became convinced that this new and great Empire was the kingdom of iron of which Daniel prophesied 500 years previous, when he was called to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream.[2] I expressed these views to Simeon the scribe, and Anna the prophetess, my most intimate friends in Jerusalem.[3] They agreed with me that such an interpretation was reasonable and probable, and that if correct, the coming of Shiloh was near at hand.

"When the scribes and Pharisees publicly proclaimed this doctrine, it created a great sensation among all the Jews of Judea, and so revived their interest in the affairs of the temple, that the multitudes which came up to Jerusalem on feast days were so great as to alarm even Herod the king. He saw at once that if he would rule long and well over Palestine, he must hold the nation together by conciliating the Jews. Therefore he conceived the idea of rebuilding the temple after such a fashion as to make it outrival, if possible, the glory of the one which Solomon erected.[4] During all the while that this temple was rebuilding, I officiated regularly once or twice a

[1] Encyclopedia Britannica, Art. Rome.
[2] Dan. ii. 40.
[3] Luke ii. 25–38.
[4] Joseph, Ant. xv., 11, 1.

year among the priests of the course of Abijah. These were the years of great prosperity among the Jews. But Joachim and Anna of Nazareth were unfortunate in losing nearly all of their property through the depredations of the Roman soldiers, and through their large-hearted generosity in entertaining strangers and feeding the poor. In caring for others, they sacrificed themselves. And the neighbors say that this is the real reason why they died in the prime of life. Their two daughters, both of them beautiful, were left almost totally destitute. But Salome, the older of the two, was soon afterward married to Zebedee—at that time a resident of Nazareth also—and was thereby enabled to provide a home for Mary, her orphan sister."

"Thanks, Rabbi, thanks! Such facts as these are interesting to me. For whilst thou wast reading, my thoughts have rapidly retraced all my studies of Rome, of Carthage, of Philippi, of Asia, Greece and Italy. And there has passed before my mind's eye, the panorama of a wonderful century. I have seen such dignitaries on the stage as Lucretius, Sallust, Virgil, Horace, Livy, Cato, Ovid; such actors as Julius Cæsar, Cicero, Crassus, Pompey, Antony, Cataline, Brutus, Cassius, Cleopatra, Herod—names that will live as long as the hills and valleys mark their battlefields—as long as the blotted pages of history last—as long as the world appreciates a poet's song. Some of them were noble men, some of them debased; but all of them together

can never mould the thought of the world, nor have such influence over the nations of the earth, as the meek and lowly One whose child-life I seek to know and which has been thus far concealed from a curious world, like a parchment sealed up for the generations to come. Canst thou tell me of this?"

"My son, if thou art hungering and thirsting after this information for righteousness' sake, thou shalt be filled. But if thou art moved by a morbid curiosity such as is characteristic of the world in its present wicked state, it is not the will of the Most High God to reveal it to thee. There are some visions which none but the pure in heart are allowed to see."[1]

"Rabbi, hear me while I, like David, call upon all heaven and earth to witness the depths of my sincerity! Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!"[2]

"I will test thee in a way more satisfactory to me, my son, in the which thou canst not deceive me if thou wouldst. Seest thou this staff beside the altar of incense here at my right hand? This is the staff on which Moses leaned, the one which he threw down before the burning bush and it became a serpent.[3] This is the magical wand with which he wrought the plagues of Egypt before Pharaoh,[4] divided the waters of the Red Sea[5]

[1] Matt. v. 8. [2] Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24. [3] Ex. iv. 3.
[4] Ex. vii. 12. [5] Ex. xiv. 16.

and smote the rock in the desert when he transgressed before all Israel.[1] With this staff, I can charm thee into a long and mysterious sleep in which, if thou hast deceived me, thy soul shall be tormented with all the plagues of Egypt and with visions of serpents from which it will be well-nigh impossible ever to awaken thee. But if thou art altogether righteous, thou shalt have the desires of thine heart during this long sleep. And thou shalt enjoy pleasant dreams until the thirst of thy soul is quenched. When I awaken thee, thou shalt remember many things, and such as thou dost remember, thou mayest write down for thy friends."

"Amen and amen!" said I. "I accept the terms. But, Rabbi, wilt thou not first promise me that when I awake, I shall find thee at my side?"

"I promise thee, my son. But know thou this that whilst thou art in the trance, thou wilt think of me six times. And the seventh time I will awaken thee. Seest thou these seven lights on my golden candlestick? they once burned like that in the Holy Place of the tabernacle when Aaron was the officiating priest in the wilderness; but they were only a figure for the time then present, signifying but a shadow of good things to come.[2] Every time thou dost think of me, a light out of heaven will flash through thy mind. And the seven revelations will make up the golden candlestick by which thy feet shall walk in the

[1] Num. xx. 11. [2] Heb. ix. 9.

way of holiness throughout all the days of thy remaining years.[1] Look now therefore with all thy soul and strength upon this staff while I hold it before thy closing eyes, and thou shalt live in the generations of the past."

"Suffer me first, Rabbi, to finish this prayer: Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer!"[2]

[1] Rev. i. 20. [2] Ps. xix. 14.

First Vision

I

PREPARING FOR CHRIST

Not even an inspired pen has ever undertaken to describe the peculiar sensations experienced as one enters into a trance. In such times, a moment is as an hour and an hour as a moment. I remember looking upon that magical wand while a strange but pleasant feeling crept over me. And I remember nothing more, until I found myself standing before a quaint-looking residence among the hills of Judea south of Jerusalem.

In front of this quaint-looking residence, I saw a little company seated on the ground under a spreading juniper-tree, engaged in earnest conversation. An old man, with long, grey hair and beard, dressed in a broidered coat and linen breeches, with a curious girdle about his waist, and holding a manuscript in his hands, sat with uncovered head, teaching after the fashion of a Jewish priest. I could not see his face, but I heard his words, and marked their effect upon his hearers. He was telling them the story of how the Sacred Writings were brought together

into one volume, and explaining how this came about as the result of the yearning of Israel through many generations for the coming of the Messiah.

First in the group was an aged woman, sitting on the right hand side of the teacher, wrapped in a long, flowing robe like the one in which Rebekah was dressed when she met Isaac. She was the wife of the teacher. Next to her was a Jewish maiden, dressed in garments as white as any fuller on earth could white them. Her face was solemn and attentive; her cheeks rosy; her eyes were beautiful; and they were fixed upon the teacher in wonderful meditation. Perhaps she was sixteen years old, possibly younger, but the strong young man at her side, evidently charmed with her presence, could not have been less than thirty-five years of age. Next to him was a woman-servant, with her blind boy at her side. And these five were in a semicircle, facing their teacher. The manuscript which the teacher held in his hands was a copy of the book of Esther, which he had purchased from a scribe in Jerusalem. He had just finished reading it to his hearers, and was now acquainting them with another account of Esther's life, which he had heard in Babylon from the lips of an Assyrian nobleman.

"In the first year of the reign of Xerxes," so the Assyrian story ran, "Mordecai, the Jew, purchased a beautiful suburban home on the banks of the river Ulai, in the city of Shushan. It was

on the road which the king had made for his semi-annual journey from Shushan to Babylon. It was a historic residence, originally designed and erected for the palace of a prince. But during the many revolutions that came in rapid succession in the political affairs of Persia and Babylonia, the king was dethroned, this prince was slain, and other men came into power who did not care for this property. But this palace was precious in the sight of the Jews, because in it the prophet Daniel had once been entertained, and on its house-top he saw the vision of the ram with the two horns and of the coming of the Messiah.[1]

"Extending from the riverside to the palace was a private park, with beautiful shade trees, terraced gardens, and artificial fountains; but the magnificence of the front lawn, with its driveways and walks, with its foliage-plants and flowers, with its great shade trees and shrubbery, surpassed all else in beauty.

"Soon after Mordecai secured the title to this property, he made a feast to a thousand of his friends. The most prominent Jews in all the world were there. His relatives great and small were there. Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai, came all the way from the coast of the Persian Gulf in order to be at that feast. Seraiah of Babylon, Hachaliah of Media, and Nehum of Nineveh were there.

"There was a great evergreen tree in that

[1] Dan. viii. 2.

front lawn, which had been brought in its infancy from the cedars of Lebanon by an officer in Nebuchadnezzar's army, when he was returning from having destroyed Jerusalem precisely one hundred years previous to this very day. Under this great tree on a rustic bench, Abihail, Seraiah, and Hacaliah were seated, talking over matters pertaining to Israel's former glory and the present state of captivity, when Nehemiah, the son of Hacaliah, approached his father concerning some trouble experienced with Ezra in the playing of the children's games in the park. Ezra was the son of Seraiah, and consequently both parents were much interested in the nature of the complaint. Abihail was interested also when he found that his daughter Esther was involved in the trouble. It seemed that Ezra had persuaded Esther not to play with Nehemiah. Ezra was the oldest of the three, and Esther the youngest. Nehemiah argued that Ezra being thirteen years old, ought to play with the children of that age, rather than with Esther, who was only ten years old.

"The three children were immediately summoned to appear before their parents, at the foot of the tree known as the cedar of Lebanon. When they arrived, Seraiah, the father of Ezra, inquired of them whether they understood the meaning of their own names. He told them that Nehemiah signifieth comfort, Ezra signifieth help, and Esther signifieth star; and that unless the boys could agree together to comfort and

help the star, neither of them ought to be allowed to play with Esther any more.

"There was no further trouble in the park that afternoon. Both Ezra and Nehemiah played with Esther, and became very much attached to her.

"Three years afterward, a malignant fever was epidemic along the coast of the Persian Gulf, and Esther's father and mother died. Mordecai therefore sent for Esther, his uncle's child, and brought her to his own home, and reared her as his own daughter."

"Is that how she came to be called the daughter of Mordecai?" asked the maiden dressed in white.

"Doubtless, Mary, it was in some such way as that," replied the teacher; "but thou shouldst not forget that this is only an Assyrian tradition. It is certainly correct in its historical setting, but it may not be true that Ezra and Nehemiah ever met and loved Esther. It would be strange, however, if three such prominent persons did live in the same generation so near to one another, and did unite their efforts so harmoniously, so enthusiastically and so successfully to the same great end, and yet never did meet one another nor feel any special interest in or love for one another."

"Doth the Assyrian story affirm that they loved one another?" asked Mary.

"To awaken intense interest in these heroic lives by giving them such a dramatic coloring,

seemeth to have been the very purpose for which the Assyrian story was devised," replied the teacher. "The hypothesis is reasonable and fascinating. According to that tradition, both Ezra and Nehemiah frequently visited Mordecai's home to enjoy the delightful company of the charming Esther, whose name Mordecai changed to Hadassah when she became his adopted daughter.[1] Ezra having been reared in the great city of Babylon, presumed that he could outrun and outwit his country friend Nehemiah in the art of love-making. He was present when her sixteenth birthday was celebrated, and frequently displayed his learning by quoting a little verse of poetry in her ears, which made her heart open itself to him as the rose openeth to welcome the dawning of a new day. He boasted of his ancestry, and told her that he belonged to the tribe of Levi, and that he would therefore be a priest in the temple if, while he yet lived, the great Deliverer should come of whom Daniel had prophesied. He told her, moreover, that it was his purpose to go to Jerusalem, by and by, and to rebuild the city and to devote all his life to an effort to restore again the throne of David to Israel.

"Nehemiah also came to see her in that same delightful month of June, soon after Ezra had departed. With but little more persuasion, Esther would have plighted her troth to Ezra before he left. She had treasured up his words in

[1] Esth. ii. 7.

her heart, and she remembered well how her parents used to pray that she might have a woman's part in ushering in the reign of the Messiah. She was beginning to feel that the way had opened for just such a career in companionship with Ezra.

"The full moon was seemingly resting over her childhood's home, on the coast of the Persian Gulf, as with a wondrous soft and mellow light, it looked down upon Nehemiah and Esther walking arm in arm along the banks of the Ulai river. The spraying fountains and terraced gardens of that beautiful park, in which they were then promenading on that June evening, had witnessed in former years the trouble between Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, when as children they played together. In those days, their parents sat on the judgment-seat before which they were called to have all their troubles settled, but now it was different. Then it was only the question of a companionship for an afternoon; now it was the companionship of a lifetime. Then it was a matter for an earthly father to consider; now it was a matter for the Father in heaven to direct.

"As they walked by the riverside, he looked down into her sweet, blushing face and said:

"'If I knew that the pathway in which my feet shall go were strewn with thorns instead of flowers, I would not ask thee to follow on and share my woe. Whatever my lot may be, I pray that thou mayest always walk the path Jeho-

vah hath ordained for thee. Six years ago, I heard thy father say he hoped that thou wouldst one day be a queen. Hadassah, I have dreamed of that coming day, when I shall be the king. I am of the tribe of Judah, a direct descendant of David. Somehow I have the feeling that the Lord God of Israel will bring that to pass during this generation which the prophet Daniel saw in his vision on yonder house-top. Jerusalem will be restored to her former position among the cities of the earth, and the throne of David will be set up again in Zion. I hope to be anointed king, and to have thee for my queen. Hadassah, what sayest thou?'

"Esther sighed. To her mind, it was no trivial thing to possess the hearts of two such promising young men as Ezra and Nehemiah, and by her choice shape their destiny. Moreover, she was greatly impressed with the very strange fact that both of them looked forward to high positions in the redemption of Israel. It was marvellously strange also that, without knowing each other's heart, they were already united in a common aim of life, and desirous of the same companion. She was about to make a reply when their attention was attracted by the sight of a courier from the king's palace, galloping at full speed along the king's highway. In front of Mordecai's residence, he reined up his steed and alighted. His royal dress and military uniform caused a flurry of excitement in the entire household. He held in his hands a document which

caused Mordecai to tremble when he saw the king's seal upon it.

"'Bring into my presence all that are in thine house,' was the commandment with which the courier saluted Mordecai. While this was being done, the king's chariot arrived, with a military guard in charge, and stopped at Mordecai's gate. Nehemiah knelt beside Esther, in the company of them that prostrated themselves at the courier's feet to hear the king's decree. And this was the writing therein,

"'I, Ahasuerus, king of Media and Persia, and ruler of all the provinces from Ethiopia unto India, unto Mordecai my servant: Peace and at such a time. I command thee to deliver thy daughter, Hadassah, unto Hegai my chamberlain, the keeper of my women, who will bring her unto me, that I may know her whether I would like her to wife in the stead of Vashti, the queen which I have deposed. Fare thee well.'[1]

"As he heard the words, Nehemiah groaned and quivered. Esther screamed. But the strong arm of the soldier was immediately thrust around her waist, and she was lifted up and carried to the king's chariot and hurried on to Hegai. As they were lifting her into the chariot, she looked back toward Nehemiah and cried, 'Woe is me, woe is me! how shall I now have part in restoring'—

"The king's servant placed his hand upon her mouth before her sentence was finished, and she

[1] Esth. ii. 3.

was taken captive to the king's harem, where her loved ones could hear her cries no more.

"The Assyrian story differeth not at all from the Scriptural account given in the book of Esther concerning the events which followed. She became the wife of the greatest king then living. At twenty-two years of age, she was able to stand in the highest court on earth as the attorney for all Israel, and there to plead her cause successfully against Haman, the most powerful genius in all the king's dominions.[1] The Scriptural account doth not say more than this, but the Assyrian story saith that it was through Esther's influence that Nehemiah and Ezra were honored with the high offices which they held.[2] And it may be true that it was through her influence that the kings who succeeded Ahasuerus on the throne allowed both Ezra and Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem, and to rebuild the city and to become great rulers in Judea.[3] It may be true that it was through Esther's suggestion and influence that Ezra devoted his whole life to the one work of collecting and editing the Sacred Writings. It was the crowning day of Ezra's life, the day when Nehemiah finished building the walls around Jerusalem, and called for all the people to gather themselves together as one man into the broad place that was before the water gate, to hear the words of the law from the lips of Ezra, the scribe.[4] That was the day when Ezra gave

[1] Esth. vii. 6.
[2] Neh. i. 11.
[3] Ezra x. 10, and Neh. v. 14.
[4] Neh. viii. 2-6.

to the world the book known as the Scriptures, after having devoted his scholarly mind throughout a whole lifetime to collecting and classifying the inspired manuscripts."

"Are the Scriptures which we now have, the very same that Ezra compiled?" asked the young man at Mary's side.

"They are the very same, Joseph," the teacher replied, "with the addition of one book more. A short time after Ezra's death, there came into Jerusalem a prophet whose name was Malachi. The message which he brought was written down and added to the Sacred Writings which Ezra had compiled."

"Was the prophecy of Malachi very different from that which the other prophets had spoken?" asked Mary.

"Yea, yea, there was something very strange in the prophecy of Malachi. It made a great sensation in Jerusalem. In the name of Jehovah, he proclaimed the strange doctrine, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.'[1]

"All Israel had been expecting the Messiah to appear at any day. But Malachi convinced them that His coming could not be until after the return of Elijah. This doctrine changed the whole current of Israel's thought into a new channel, so that we are now looking for Elijah rather than for the Messiah."

"Thinkest thou, Zacharias, that the people 500

[1] Mal. iv. 5.

years ago, really believed that the Messiah was about to come?" asked Mary.

"Yea, my child, the thing is true," replied the teacher. "They undoubtedly thought that He might at any time appear. They thought so until Malachi came with the new doctrine that Elijah must first come. Some of the scribes, however, always did maintain that in Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream,[1] he plainly said that there would be four universal kingdoms before the coming of the great King whose kingdom should have no end. Nehemiah and Ezra, in their old age, were inclined to this view. Zerubbabel thought so too. And Zerubbabel, because he was of the tribe of Judah, a descendant of David and the first to return to Judea and to rebuild the temple, held to the conviction that when the Messiah doth come, He will descend through his posterity. With this hope set before them, his descendants are even yet keeping on file an accurate record of their genealogy."

"Both of us are descendants of Zerubbabel, and our family record is at Bethlehem," remarked Joseph to Mary.

"And I never understood before why these records are so carefully kept," replied Mary. "I have learned a good deal from this story of Esther. Thus far my life hath been very much like hers. I remember how my parents used to hope and pray that I might have a woman's part

[1] Dan. ii. 36–45.

in preparing the way of the Messiah. I wonder if, like Esther, my feet are destined to walk in a path so different from that which I anticipate."

"If the scribes are right in their interpretation of Daniel's visions, is not the Roman Empire, in which we live, the fourth universal kingdom referred to in that prophecy? and if so, may we not expect the coming of the Messiah in this generation?" queried the wife of the teacher.

"Elijah must first come, Elisabeth, and restore all things."

"May it not be possible that the scribes do not understand the inner meaning of that prophecy concerning Elijah's return? Why doth not some priest, when he is in the Holy Place offering incense at the altar, inquire of the Lord concerning this thing?" asked Joseph.

"Would to God, Joseph, that I might be the priest to make such inquiries of the Lord. For nearly two score years I have officiated regularly among the priests of the course of Abijah, and yet, during all that time, I have never been so fortunate as to draw the lot to offer incense at the altar. That privilege only cometh once in a lifetime, and for me it will probably never come, if I fail to draw the lot at this feast which is now at hand."

"We will pray for thee that this blessing may come to thee," remarked Mary.

"So will we all," exclaimed the clear young voice of the poor blind boy.

Mary's eyes filled with tears as she turned and

looked upon the afflicted boy and seemed to feel in her own heart that perhaps, after all, the prayers of a blind boy might prevail with God more than her own. And as she was looking upon him, I heard a voice from above me proclaim,

"Neither did this boy sin nor his parents that he was born blind, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." [1]

I looked to see whence the voice came. And I beheld a golden candlestick like the one which Moses made for the Holy Place in the tabernacle. Its large central lamp shone like the North star. It seemed to be but a few furlongs away on the hilltop. I thought of the burning bush which Moses saw, and like him I drew near to see it.

[1] John ix. 3.

II

THE VISION OF ZACHARIAS

THAT light in the North I followed, as when one chases a rainbow, until I traced it to the temple in Jerusalem. And there I found a great audience, gathered out of every nation under heaven, offering sacrifices innumerable and praying for the Messianic day to come. Jerusalem was filled with worshippers. All night long, hundreds of officiating priests paced to and fro about the temple and the sacred enclosures.

As the day began to break over Mount Olivet, the call to prayers proclaimed with a silver trumpet that the great day of the feast had come. The lots were ready to be drawn. And among the excited priests assembled, I saw the old man with hoary locks and beard, the sainted teacher from the far away country home. He put forth his trembling hand to draw as he had often done before. The anxiety of his countenance was transfigured into ecstasy when he realized that his time had at last come. Hurriedly he made ready to offer the incense at the altar.

The news quickly spread among the people that Zacharias, the aged priest from Jutta, had drawn the lot. By the red light of the coals

which the priest had just stirred on the altar of sacrifice, I saw Elisabeth weeping for joy. I saw also the solemn and worshipful face of the young and beautiful Mary at her side. As they saw the smoke of the incense going up from the Holy Place, they knew that the crowning moment of Zacharias' life had come. A moment later they prostrated themselves in prayer, with thousands of others who worshipped that morning,[1] and prayed for the coming of the Messiah.

Patiently the people waited to see him emerge from the Holy Place and lead the responsive service in the temple. But he came not. A holy fear of something terrible began to settle down upon the immense audience;[2] and the excited priests communed with one another in whispers. The high-priest suggested to the guard that possibly some accident had befallen Zacharias, that he had gone too near the Divine presence, or that the suffocating smoke of the incense had proven too great for one of his age. But ere the guard had turned to investigate, there was a rustling of the curtains like the noise of angels' wings. And the awe-stricken people trembled.

With steady step but nervous bearing, the aged priest came forth unto the multitude, making signs of having seen a vision, yet speaking never a word.[3] And when he refused to tell or write down the vision, the audience broke up in confusion and went away. And some believed that

[1] Luke i. 10. [2] Luke i. 21. [3] Luke i. 22.

an angel had appeared unto him, and some believed not.

Elisabeth pressed forward to him notwithstanding all the obstacles in a woman's way, and throwing her arms about his neck, wept as a little child. He made signs for a writing tablet and as he wrote she read:

"There appeared unto me an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And I was troubled when I saw him, and fear fell upon me. But the angel said unto me, Fear not, Zacharias, because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife, Elisabeth, shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine or strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him. And I said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto me, I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee, and to bring thee these good tidings. And behold, thou shalt be silent and not able to speak, until the day

that these things shall come to pass, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."[1]

"Elisabeth, my dear," Zacharias continued to write as he leaned against one of the great white pillars in the court of the women, "thou dost see that this message is of such a nature that I could not tell it unto the people without exposing ourselves to the merciless gaze and angry scorn of a people prone to disbelieve any heavenly message, and accustomed to reproach both thee and me for our childless condition. They would have declared my vision only a delusion arising from the excitement of being in the Holy Place, at my age in life, and under my circumstances. Moreover, the angel said to me that I must be silent until the day that these things shall come to pass, and then sealed up my mouth.[2] Elisabeth, my dear, is this to be the manner of Elijah's second coming?[3] If so, thou art blessed of God as Sarah was of old. Our prayers have not been in vain, though no answer hath come until now. No true prayer ever faileth. The very first thing the angel said to me was, 'Zacharias, thy supplication is heard.'[4] I could hardly believe it.[5] My poor doubting soul hath lived so many years in despair. But now, like Job of olden time, I can say, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand up at the last upon the earth."[6]

[1] Luke i. 11–20. [2] Luke i. 20. [3] Luke i. 17.
[4] Luke i. 13. [5] Luke i. 18. [6] Job xix. 25.

Elisabeth read the letter in amazement. Then she lifted her expressive eyes to his, and gracefully rested her head upon his shoulder in silence. He leaned forward in deep meditation, and as he did so, I saw in him the face of the man I had seen upon the rock in the wilderness of Judea in silent prayer, the Rabbi who held before my closing eyes the magical wand of Moses. Convulsively I summoned all my powers to awaken myself from the trance, when lo, I heard the voice of the prophet saying, "As thou hast thought of me once, so shalt thou think of me again. The first vision is past. Behold, the second cometh quickly."

Second Vision

I

THE ANNUNCIATION TO MARY

ONCE more I looked upon that scene where Elisabeth stood in the temple, in the court of the women, leaning upon the bosom of Zacharias, her eyes closed, her head bowed in worshipful meditation. In her right hand she held the note which her husband had written, her index finger unconsciously pointing to that underscored sentence: "He shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah."[1]

I repeated the words again and again, forgetting all else beside, as when a child is lulled to sleep by his mother's song. And before me came a vision as the brightness of the noonday sun, and out of it, the voice of an angel saying, "I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God.[2] I now place upon the matronly head of Elisabeth a crown of life, in which I have set the bright and morning star. Upon the table of her heart I have inscribed a theme which shall cause her to think of Elijah the prophet and dream of the Christ. Understandest thou this?"

"Hast thou never read of the juniper-tree near

[1] Luke i. 17. [2] Luke i. 19.

the cave of Machpelah, under which Elijah lay down and slept when he fled from Carmel before the face of Jezebel?[1] And dost thou not remember how an angel came and prepared him food and gave him drink, in the strength of which he went for forty days and nights and dwelt in the cave of Horeb,[2] the mount of God? Follow thou me, and I will take thee to the fountain from which I brought that cruse of water, and there thy soul shall be refreshed also."

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, as it seemed to me, I stood among the hills of Lebanon, beside a sparkling spring. It was in a valley, a peculiarly rich and well-cultivated valley, running in a waving line nearly east and west, about a mile long and one-fourth as broad, filled with cornfields, hedges of cactus, and fruit-bearing trees. At a point where the valley seemed to have enlarged itself to form a sort of basin or inclosure, along the lower edge of the hillside, was a quiet, secluded village.[3] And from this village or little city, a path, well worn with several generations of feet, led to this life-giving fountain where the natives quenched their thirst.

"Seest thou a caravan of camels coming from toward the sea?" asked a mother in Israel, of a maiden seated at her side under a thick-set olive-tree, close by this crystal fountain. And a sweet voice replied: "I see camels but they look not like the ones which went with ours."

[1] 1 Kings xix. 4. [2] 1 Kings xix. 8. [3] Smith's Dict. Bible, Art. Nazareth.

"O Zebedee, my son, my son!" the mother exclaimed. "I entreated him not to go. But the life of a fisherman hath such a charm for him, as though he were born to that end. I could not dissuade him. When he left yesterday, before the break of morn, for a journey of twenty miles with that excursion of ungodly men, he promised to return before the Sabbath day. But I feared then that fishing hath more attractions for his companions than the synagogue. And through their evil influence, my boy may be persuaded to break the holy Sabbath day. The wickedness of these young men of Nazareth is known abroad, until the reputation of our city is as something terribly bad."

"Fret not thyself, mother," said the maiden, as with a soft, white, beautiful hand she pinned a spray of orange blossoms on the sighing bosom of the aged saint. "There are yet two hours before the Sabbath day is come. And Zebedee will keep his word. He always hath done so. I only hope that Joseph will be as good and true to me as Salome's husband is to her."

Then I remembered the maiden dressed in white, as I looked upon that same beautiful face and expressive eyes which I saw in the hill country of Judea.

"Ichi, Ichi," rang out a clear, strong voice, and down upon their knees came a caravan of camels, for their riders to alight and drink. Startled by the familiar voice, the maiden quickly arose, and looking upon the little company, she

saw a woman-servant with a blind boy. Then she cried out with exceeding great joy: "Behold, Hananiah is here, his wife and boy also, neighbors of Zacharias and Elisabeth. I will now let down my pitcher and give them to drink, their friends and their camels likewise."

"Blessed be thou of the Lord, my child," exclaimed an aged man, a prince in Israel, who had alighted from the first camel and now stood ready to drink. "Thou dost remind me of Rebekah, when at the well of Nahor, she gave drink unto Abraham's servant and his camels.[1] And the Lord blessed her and made her the mother of all the faithful in Israel."

"This is Simeon, the scribe, Mary," said Hananiah, "whom I have brought from Jerusalem at the request of our good high-priest, to lead the service in thy synagogue on the morrow. Thou hast heard thy kinsman, Zacharias, speak of him.

"There remaineth yet not two hours before the Sabbath day is come, when I must be four miles distant in Cana of Galilee. Wouldst thou kindly speak unto the ruler of the synagogue for me, that he take Simeon unto his own house? and I will hasten on and tarry not.

"Behold, I have here also a letter from thy cousin, Elisabeth. On the morrow after the Sabbath day, I will return to thine house, and if thou desirest to return with me to the hill country of Judea, thou shalt ride this white camel which Elisabeth hath hired."

[1] Gen. xxiv. 45.

While he was yet speaking, behold, Zebedee was approaching, his camel rapidly pacing alone. His companions, carousing and hilarious, had refused to return until they had seen the city of Capernaum. But he, tearing himself from them, desiring to be ever true to wife and child, was coming back at the appointed time.

"Mother, have I kept my promise?" he asked, as he approached the spring. "And, Mary, how fareth Salome, and my baby boy, John?"

"Anxiously waiting for thee, brother, all of us anxiously waiting for thee," responded the soft, sweet voice of Mary.

"Dost thou know Simeon, the scribe? He hath come from Jerusalem to speak in our synagogue on the morrow. Present him to thy mother."

"Thy mother was getting impatient for thy return," said Mary, addressing her remarks to Zebedee, while Simeon was speaking with the mother, "just as a caravan of camels came in from Judea in charge of Hananiah, neighbor to Zacharias. And they brought Simeon and seven travellers going to Cana of Galilee. He brought also this letter from Elisabeth, to me, which thou mayest read and show to thy mother and to my sister, and tell me what thou thinkest."

Zebedee took the letter and read it aloud.

"My dear Mary:

"I had hoped to write to thee before now, but, as thou knowest, the winter hath been long

and cold, and I found no one by whom I could send a letter to thee. Since that morning we parted in Jerusalem, I have scarcely been to a neighbor's house, so closely have I been hid away here in these hills of our country home. But, O Mary, thou canst not imagine how much I have missed thee. I wish so much that thou couldst come up here and spend this summer also with me. I have so much to tell thee. To me thou art the dearest soul in all this world. I sometimes think that the angels delight to whisper thy name in my ears; for I so often dream of thee. And when I do, I dream such beautiful things. I am sure that thou wouldst be delighted to hear what the vision was that Zacharias saw in the temple. But I dare not tell it to thee with pen and paper. But, Mary, come, do come to see me, even if thou canst stay but a little while. Tell Joseph that Zacharias and Elisabeth entreat him to be gracious to them, and rejoice their hearts through one more summer with the presence of his charming betrothed. Hananiah, who bringeth to thee this letter, is, as thou knowest, our neighbor and friend, a man of God to whose fatherly care Joseph need not fear to entrust thee. His wife and poor blind boy accompany him. They are going to Cana to bring a party of women to Hebron. And he hath promised me that if thou wilt come, thou shalt ride the white camel, which is the prettiest and best of his flock. Do come. I hope to see thee soon. Fare thee well."

"A beautiful letter, Mary," remarked Zebedee. "Let my mother be to thee as thy mother, and let her counsel prevail."

"Let Simeon, the scribe, ride into the city upon thy servant's camel," continued Zebedee, as he bowed reverently before the princely teacher, "and thy servant will follow after."

The time of evening had come when many daughters of the men of the city were hurrying forth with their pitchers to the fountain. And as they came and went, in the multitude of them returning, the mother in Israel with the fair young damsel at her side disappeared from my sight.

And the angel said unto me, "Canst thou discern the face of the sky and learn the lessons of the rising and setting sun, as seen from Nazareth of Galilee? Observe then, now, how that glorious orb of day is sinking to rest behind Mount Carmel, that towering monument of Elijah's fame, some twenty miles in the distance. There did the prophet prove who is the true God in Israel.[1] And there at the brook, Kishon, he slew the priests of Baal.[2] A little cloud this very moment resteth upon its summit, where he prayed seven times for rain.[3] That mountain is a hallowed spot, precious in the sight of God, written in the records of angels, and treasured in the memory of man."[4]

"Close now thine eyes and thou shalt see the

[1] 1 Kings xviii. 24.
[2] 1 Kings xviii. 40.
[3] 1 Kings xviii. 44.
[4] James v. 17.

light of the world, like unto the sun of righteousness, rising in the glory of his strength over the sea of Galilee."

I did so and behold, it was morning. Over the sea of Galilee, twenty miles distant in the east, the rising sun was telling of a glorious Sabbath day. The city was hushed in silence, except the noise of worshipping feet on their way to the synagogue.

I saw the faces of Mary and her sister, as they entered into the synagogue prepared to throw their whole soul into prayer and worship. When Simeon stood up to read, there was delivered unto him the book of the prophecy of Isaiah. And he opened the book and found the place where it is written,

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this."[1]

And he closed the book and sat down. And the eyes of all that were in the synagogue were fastened on him while he spoke to them of the Messiah that should come. He told them of how it had been revealed to him by the Holy Ghost

[1] Isa. ix. 6, 7.

that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ.[1] And that the people in Jerusalem were in a state of expectancy, not knowing when He would suddenly come to His temple.

He drew a beautiful picture of the glorious and eternal reign of the great King, and of the high honor which that family would receive, from the immediate circle of which God would anoint His Son.

The worshippers returned to their homes with earnest, thoughtful faces, many of them in groups reasoning together concerning the things they had heard. But Mary and her sister came to the crystal fountain for a cool and refreshing draught.

"If the Messiah cometh of the lineage of David," reasoned Mary with Salome, "will He not be related to both Joseph and myself? And will He not have pity upon our poverty and social rank, and help us into better positions? Joseph is an honest, hard-working, straightforward man, only an humble carpenter it is true, but a nobler heart never throbbed within a human breast. I cannot see how any one, though he be king on the throne, can help but admire and love such a man as he."

"I have thought, Mary," replied Salome, "that if I were rich and in Jerusalem where the Christ is expected to come, I would wonder if my baby boy, John, may not be He. I know that a mother's eyes and a mother's dreams are never

[1] Luke ii. 26.

true they say, but, somehow, I seem to see in his cherub face a miniature vision[1] of a new Jerusalem, a glorified King, a Prince of Peace. Tell it not unto others, lest they laugh me to scorn. For I know too well how a woman's heart can be made to bleed through the disdainful look of the rich and proud. I remember that our mother used to pray that we each might have a woman's part in preparing the way of the Lord."

"I, too, Salome," replied Mary, "feel that He cannot come from any of our immediate relatives for they are poor and live in a despised city. Yet why should God, who possesseth the world, consider wealth an object? And why should He despise our low estate or reject us, the poor creatures of His hand, if our hearts are but right in His sight? Did He not bless our father, David, and take him from the sheepfold to be a king over Israel? Then why should not David's greater Son be chosen from the humble walks in life?"

"I perceive, Mary," replied Salome, "that thy visit to Elisabeth hath made thee a skillful reasoner and thy words are pleasant words. And I would urge thee to return to her again, and defer thy marriage until autumn. Zebedee will confer with Joseph, or thou mightst confer with him thyself, and he will not say thee nay. If thou goest, thou must make hasty preparation as soon as the Sabbath endeth. For Hananiah, with his company of Cana women, will seek to

[1] Rev. xxi. 10.

be well on his journey before the sun groweth hot."

"It will take us four days, Salome, to reach the home of Zacharias, as thou thyself dost know; for it is nearly an hundred miles distant. Yet I think it likely I can, with thy help, make ready by the rising of the morrow's sun. But let us now, for a little while, possess our souls in peace, seated here under this olive tree, where the mother of Zebedee and I were seated yesterday when Simeon came. I love this spot. Here I have had many pleasing meditations[1] and here I have offered many prayers."

"Thou knowest, Mary, that I can tarry but a little time away from my baby boy. I must return, but thou mayest abide here with thy fancy free, under the pleasant shade by this refreshing crystal spring. And here thou canst meditate on what thy life will be, as maidens love to do."

"It shall be according unto thy word, Salome, only be not thou anxious about me if I tarry here until the hour of the evening sacrifice: for that is the hour I love to be alone."

"So thou dost return before the twilight cometh, my sister, all will be well. Till then possess thy soul in peace."

As Salome walked slowly away, Mary turned her eyes toward Jerusalem, as Daniel used to do when he prayed three times a day.[2] Her lips moved, but I could not hear her prayer. Yet I knew from the expressions of her face that her

[1] Smith's Dict. Bible, Art. Nazareth. [2] Dan. vi. 10.

heart was set on the wonderful visions she had seen in the synagogue that day. The words of Simeon, the scribe, were like unto the words of Zacharias which she heard from his lips as she sat at his feet, beside Joseph her betrothed, in the far-away home at Jutta. What could be that vision which Zacharias had seen? Why did they refuse to tell her when in Jerusalem? And why was Elisabeth so anxious to tell her now? And why should Elisabeth dream of her? And why should the angels know her name or care for the orphan maid of Nazareth?

As she soliloquized thus, speaking softly to herself, the angel at my side, fixing his marvellous eyes upon her, drew near and said,

"Hail thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee." But she was greatly troubled at that saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her, "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father, David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

And Mary said unto the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" And the angel said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall

overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elisabeth, thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren. For no word from God shall be void of power."

And Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." [1]

And the angel departed from her. Then Mary arose quickly and went unto her home.

[1] Luke i. 28–38.

II

MARY'S VISIT TO ELISABETH

And the angel said unto me, "Hast thou never read how David saith in the Psalms, The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them?[1] Even so am I sent to deliver this beautiful daughter of David out of all her troubles.[2] On the morrow I will go with her on this long journey to Elisabeth, though she shall not see me nor know that I am present. Neither Simeon, the scribe, nor Hananiah, the servant, nor yet the gay young women from Cana on their camels, will realize that the eye of the angel of the Lord seeth them, and his ear heareth their conversation. Thou mayst go with me, but thou shalt be silent until thou seest me alone at the well of David."

"The well of David!" exclaimed a voice within me. "What well goeth by that name and where?"

The angel smiled as he saw this question in my heart but answered not.

It seemed to me like months before I spoke again. Mary had visited Elisabeth and returned to Nazareth. The lips of Zacharias had been unsealed, and all the hill country of Judea was in

[1] Ps. xxxiv. 7. [2] Heb. i. 14.

much perplexity over the marvellous stories afloat concerning the birth and christening of his son.[1] A priest from the inner sanctuary of Jerusalem, made haste to go up from Jerusalem to Jutta to officially inquire of Zacharias and Elisabeth themselves what manner of child this was whom they had named John. Hardly had his feet disappeared outside of the temple gate, when the angel drew near and whispered something into the ear of Simeon the Just, and Anna the prophetess, who were at this time in different courts of the temple with their faces turned toward the Holy Place in agonizing prayer. I heard not what the message was, but I observed how their faces immediately shone with the radiance of exceeding joy, as when one sees a heavenly vision.

Instantly the scene was changed, and I saw the walls of an ancient city, walls, whereupon the setting sun revealed a long-neglected masonry crumbling with the weight of centuries; a city set on a hill, a city whose glory seemed to have passed away with other years. Then the angel drew near unto me again and said,

"In this place was Benjamin born,[2] and here Rachel died.[3] On these hillsides, Ruth gleaned after the reapers,[4] and in these fields, Jesse fed his flocks of sheep.[5] In this city was David born, and here by the ancient gate is the well where oftentimes in boyhood days he quenched his

[1] Luke i. 65. [2] Gen. xxxv. 18. [3] Gen. xxxv. 19.
[4] Ruth ii. 4. [5] 1 Sam. xvii. 12, 20.

thirst, and whose sparkling waters he could ne'er forget when reigning on the throne. Dearer to him was this old well than all the fountains of Esdraelon."

Then I remembered how, in after years, David longed and said, "O, that one would give me to drink of the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate! And the three mighty men brake through the hosts of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David."[1] Then was my tongue loosed and I said, "Is this the well of David?"

"This is the well of which I spake to thee while we were yet in Galilee," replied the angel, as he sat himself down upon a rustic seat near by its entrance. "And the things thou hast seen and heard since then thou shalt not write down in a book, nor relate them to thy friends; for they are kept secret from the foundation of the world and it is not lawful for thee to utter them."

"May I not speak," said I, "of Mary's three months' stay[2] in Jutta, and briefly outline a few of those many inspiring conversations she had with Elisabeth during that time? and of how, at Elisabeth's suggestion, she wrote for Joseph to come to her there, that Zacharias might, in a venerable, dignified, priestly manner, inform him of events too delicate for her to mention? of how sorrow, scepticism and anger united to conquer his spirit, until he vowed within himself that the promised wedding should

[1] 2 Sam. xxiii. 15, 16. [2] Luke i. 56.

never take place? of how Mary wept in silence until thou didst put forth thine hand to keep her heart from breaking; yet did she find no fault with Joseph because she knew it was all so strange to him, so mysterious, so unreasonable? Wilt thou not at least permit me to describe that awful night, that night when Mary and Elisabeth and Zacharias wept together, that sleepless night when Joseph tossed to and fro on his couch, until, exhausted with agony, he fell asleep, resolved to go home in the morning, never again to see the face of his betrothed? How toward break of day, thou didst appear to him in a dream,[1] and how Mary and the entire household of Zacharias shouted for joy, when it was known that an angel had appeared unto Joseph establishing the word of the Lord in his soul? Must I seal up all this?"

"Thou shalt not describe these things, O, thou son of man. The stars shine more brightly because the space about them is not filled up with material substance. Why should the great Creator endow men with the faculty of imagination and then make no provision for its exercise? Thoughtful people of all ages will ever regard Mary as human, modest, blushing, refined, pious, noble and preëminent in all the higher traits of true womanhood; for on this hypothesis alone, can they understand how she hath been thus honored of heaven and admired by angels. Cultured imaginations will never accuse her lips

[1] Matt. i. 20.

of whispering a secret into the ear of her betrothed such as modest women long married blush to tell their husbands. It hath pleased God, however, to select a beloved physician,[1] to whom, in due time, Mary, in her old age, will confide such secrets as belong to his profession;[2] after her death, he shall make known to the world all that God wisheth the world to know concerning these matters."

"But as for Joseph, it is enough to say that he is a righteous man.[3] Thoughtful people do not need to be told how a righteous man will act. But that thy friends may be without excuse for their unbelief, thou mayest say these words: And Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for it is He that shall save His people from their sins. And Joseph arose from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him."[4]

As the angel concluded these words, I lifted up my eyes and behold, a camel was kneeling at the roadside near the well. A traveller worn and weary, covered with dust and humiliation,

[1] Col. iv. 14. [2] Luke i. 3, 4. [3] Matt. i. 19. [4] Matt. i. 19–24.

assisted the woman whose camel he was leading, to alight to the ground while he fetched a pitcher of water from David's well and gave her to drink. As she removed her veil to quench her thirst, I recognized the beautiful face of Mary and I knew that the dust-covered traveller was the righteous Joseph, her husband.

"Stay thou here, Mary," said he, "and rest beside the well, while I go into the city and make sure of our place of abode. For the city appeareth to be full of guests who have come up to be enrolled for the taxing. Peradventure there is not room for us in the caravanserai, I must needs seek shelter elsewhere."

"Speed thou thy return, my Joseph," replied Mary, "for I am very weary with this long journey. We have driven hard to reach the city before the night cometh, and I am longing to lay me down and rest."

The full moon was majestically rising above the mountains of Moab, watching the twilight fade away over the Great Sea, where myriads of white-sail ships were carrying on the commerce of the world, obedient to the great emperor's will. The lowing of the cattle, the bleating of sheep, the merry laughter of children, the sound of the harp in the visitor's hands and the Psalms they sang, brought again to every heart the memories of the sainted dead, the sweet singer of Israel in all his early surroundings. But the glory of his kingdom had passed away, and the long promised Messiah was not yet come. Rome ruled

the world and Quirinius was governor of Syria.[1]

"Methinks I see one like unto Boaz, a mighty man of wealth, coming out of the gate with Joseph," said I to the angel. "And lo, he is leading a flock of sheep as a shepherd in Israel."

But the angel said not a word until, having watered the sheep at the well, the kind-hearted Boaz thus spoke in the presence of Mary:

"Our city is very full to-night. My own home is filled with guests until there is no room remaining for another soul. Would to God I had place for thee and thine, and for thy camel, other than that which my barn affordeth. Thrice welcome ye will be to such a shelter and to such a couch as the provender there can supply for the night. And on the morrow, may God grant to thee a better home!"

"Anywhere will do for me if only I may find rest for my weary soul," answered Mary in the despair of her exhausted strength.

And when Joseph had made obeisance to Boaz for the kindness proffered, he and Mary disappeared within the gate. And the angel said unto me,

"Arise, let us follow this shepherd into the fields with his sheep."

[1] Luke ii. 2.

III

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Down into the valley looking toward Jerusalem, our princely Boaz led the way for the finest flock of sheep in all Judea. They knew their good shepherd's voice, and they loved him too, for they followed close about him with manifest pride.

In his hand he held a large cypress, pear-shaped instrument, having a convex back, somewhat like the vertical section of a gourd. It had twelve musical strings, on which his fingers would now and then sound a note as if impatient to be playing.

"What manner of instrument is this, with its cunning workmanship and gold trimmings?" queried I of the angel, as the shepherd sat himself down upon a large bearskin which he had spread on the ground in the open field, a mile away from Bethlehem.

"Hast thou never heard of the Psaltery?" the angel replied, "which David played with all his might when he brought up the ark from Kirjath-Jearim to Jerusalem?[1] This is that same Psaltery, an heirloom a thousand years old. And this son of David rejoiceth more in this legacy than in all

[1] 1 Chron. xiii. 8.

his earthly possessions. Thou shalt hear such music to-night as the ears of man have never known, and all the trees of these fields shall clap their hands for joy."

"Seest thou the twelve strings which this Psaltery hath, like the strings of an harp? Every string doth represent a tribe in Israel, worthless when standing alone, but priceless when united together in God's harmonious plan."

"Hearken now to the famous notes that once made David glad!"

One by one twelve notes I heard. Clear, full and distinct they were, and followed quickly with a threefold chord, wherein the dominant tone was like the eloquent voice of Judah.[1] The lute, the fife, the shepherd's whistle, responded in the distance, and the sound of cymbals like a muffled drum came throbbing up the valley. One by one twelve notes again with the threefold chord repeated; and thus three times I heard this "Shepherd's Midnight Call" to his companions, and three times came back an ever-increasing chorus of instruments, approaching nearer and nearer, until a dozen flocks and a dozen shepherds were gathered in Boaz' field, on the plains of Bethlehem.

"Have ye heard of the wonderful child whose miraculous birth hath filled all the hill country of Judea with astonishment, and caused many to believe that the appearing of the Christ is near at hand?" queried Boaz of his guests, who were

[1] Gen. xliv. 18-34.

now seated about him in a semicircle, expecting to hear and discuss some new thing.

"We have heard of the child John, the son of Zacharias," responded Jacob, whose patriarchal face, long hair and grey beard reminded me of a painting I had somewhere seen of the son of Isaac kneeling before Pharaoh.[1]

"And we remember," added Terah, whose position in the semicircle was opposite Jacob, "how twelve months ago, Zacharias claimed that the angel Gabriel appeared unto him in the Holy Place. But our high-priest said he only swooned under a stroke of paralysis, induced by the over-excitement of being in the Holy Place offering incense at the altar, at his advanced age of life."

"True," replied Boaz. "And thou didst believe our great high-priest, and so did all the people. But now it doth appear that Zacharias, indeed, saw a heavenly vision, in which this remarkable child was promised to him, the angel himself naming him John. For on no other hypothesis can we account for the fact that on the eighth day, when the child was circumcised according to the law and his name written down as commanded, the mouth of Zacharias was immediately opened and his tongue loosed,[2] and the glory of the Lord revealed to his neighbors; and fear came on all that dwelt round about him."

"Dost thou believe that this is the promised Shiloh that should come?" interrupted Japtheh,

[1] Gen. xlvii. 9.

[2] Luke i. 64.

the youngest and the most excited by this speech of all the shepherds.

"Not Shiloh himself," responded Boaz, "but peradventure he may be the forerunner of Shiloh. For in the prophecy of Malachi it is written, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.' Zacharias affirmeth that the angel said to him that this miraculous child should go before the face of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah to do the work indicated in that prophecy. If this be true, then the great Deliverer, who shall break the power of Rome and restore again to Israel the throne of our father David, will soon appear; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

"But we know," answered Jacob, "that when our Messiah cometh, He will spring, not from the tribe of Levi to which Zacharias and Elisabeth belong, but from the tribe of Judah of the seed of David, and that He will first appear in our own city, our beloved Bethlehem." [1]

As he said this, Boaz struck again the familiar chord with the triumphant tone of Judah's voice, and all the shepherds joined in to play, like an orchestra, trained for Solomon's temple, until the very hills and plains of Bethlehem reverberated with the sweet prophetic strains of Judah's final victory.

[1] Micah. v. 2; Matt. ii 5.

The flocks of sheep lifted their heads from the noise of their grazing and listened as though, in that song, they heard the voice of their redemption from the altar of burnt-sacrifice.

"Truly," said I to the angel, "thou didst prophesy aright, for I have heard such music to-night as the ears of man have never known."

"Thou shalt presently hear sweeter strains than these," he replied, "when the orchestra cometh to its grand finale."

"Our city is very full to-night," was the sentence with which Boaz broke the silence that followed the rendering of that Psalm. "And," he continued, "as I came forth with my flock to the well I found a care-worn family who could find no place at the inn.[1] He was dressed in the garb of a laboring man, a carpenter, and she was heavily veiled in cheap attire. But my heart was moved with compassion for them in their distress. I thought to offer them for their couch to-night, the manger where my oxen lay. And as she lifted her veil in recognition of my favor, I saw a most beautiful and cultured face, but heard a tone of anguish in her voice, which has haunted me all this night, when she replied in accents kind and sweet, 'Anywhere will do for me, if only I may find rest for my weary soul."

"Thy heart is over-kind, good Boaz," exclaimed Terah. "For thou dost carry thine own burdens and the sorrows of others. Our caravan-

[1] Luke ii. 7.

serai is seldom full, and strangers do not often lack in the city of David's birth."

"Thou hast spoken truly," replied Boaz, "and for that reason I have sorrow of heart that we have not the wisdom to sufficiently provide for the return of all these children of David who hold our city in such high esteem. Whether poor or rich, they are our kinsfolk, and we do well to give up our own couches for their sakes, that we may prove ourselves worthy sons of our illustrious fathers."

"Music hath made thee sad!" exclaimed Japtheh, "and thou art ill at ease because thou hast large possessions and holdest thyself responsible for what the city doeth. In this thou doest not well. Wouldst thou desire thine own Rebekah to tent with thee in the fields to-night, that such travellers as these might occupy thy couch? Wouldst thou sacrifice her comfort for the comfort of strangers?"

"Speak not so, Japtheh," replied Boaz, "Rebekah would gladly have come with me to the fields had she known of this poor woman's grief. Indeed, her couch could afford no sleep to her this night, did she but know that a daughter of David and therefore her sister, sleepeth in the manger where my oxen feed. Somehow I feel as if the searching eyes of angels look down into my soul and rebuke me, because I went not back to Rebekah with the story which I heard at the well."

"Thou hast rebuked me," answered Japtheh,

"because thou thinkest I am young and indiscreet. But I have learned from our priests in Jerusalem that to sympathize over-much with the poor and unfortunate will make even the rich to become poor also. When Shiloh cometh, he will descend out of heaven into our city, and those who possess great wealth will be dear to him as the apple of his eye; and he will make them priests forever in the courts of his God. But the poor will be as the offscouring of the land in his sight. Let us make merry and be glad, for when Shiloh cometh, the shortcomings of Bethlehem will be forgot. And what will it matter to thee, then, that once upon a time a poor man and his destitute wife spent the night in thy stable?"

"Japtheh speaketh as one of the fools," exclaimed Jacob, in solemn, measured tones. "When the Messiah cometh, He shall reign in Zion and not in Bethlehem. He shall be a man of war with a sharp, two-edged sword in His hand, to execute vengeance upon the nations, and punishments upon the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron.[1] For thus it is written in that glorious Psalm entitled, When the Messiah cometh, which the Levites sang for David, and which if rendered again on his famous harp, accompanied by our instruments, will now revive our spirits and make even our guardian angels shout for joy."

Again Boaz took up his harp, his finger resting

[1] Ps. cxlix. 7, 8.

on Judah's string. The trumpet in Terah's hands proclaimed the triumphant march begun. The rhythmical, steady beat of half-smothered cymbals was like the tread of on-coming armies; the tongue, the fife and shepherd's whistle were skillfully used to represent the penetrating voices of rejoicing children and shouting multitudes. Over and above them all could be heard the sweet, joyful, triumphant tones of David's harp, like the imperious voice of the great Commander directing the movements of His troops; the lute brought forth the noise of rushing chariots, and the high-sounding cymbals brought the angels of heaven to the ramparts to witness the great final conflict of Israel, the storming of the forts of iniquity and the crowning of the Messiah as king.

Then the angel of the Lord drew near and stood by them. And the glory of the Lord shone round about them. Their fingers ceased to play and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you; ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger."[1]

And suddenly there was with the angel a heavenly choir, a multitude of heavenly host,[2] praising God in such harmonies as the ear of man had never heard, nor the soul of man experienced.

[1] Luke ii. 9-12. [2] Luke ii. 13.

As the shepherds heard the sweet voices of that chorus, they threw their poor instruments down to the ground and fell on their faces and worshipped.

The noise of tramping armies ceased. I heard not a sound to mar the ever-returning echo of the angel's peaceful song: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace among men, in whom He is well pleased."[1]

And it came to pass that when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.[2]

Then the angel said unto me, "Did I not tell thee that thou shouldst hear such music to-night as the ears of man have never known? Now therefore arise, and let us go into the presence of the king!"

And we turned our faces toward Jerusalem.

[1] Luke ii. 14. [2] Luke ii. 15, 16.

IV

DEATH OF HEROD THE GREAT

"THOU shalt see him in three scenes, two of them hideous but one of them shall be glorious in thine eyes," said the angel to me as we passed through the western gate of the temple looking toward the king's palace.

"Our master hath been shamefully entreated," said one stalwart centurion to another, as we entered the palace gate. "These Jews have always been a stiff-necked and rebellious people, whose knees do never bow to any king save one of their own anointing, unless the unsheathed sword doth terrify and drive them."

Having said this, the speaker turned from his comrade to go in unto the king. And as the gates were opened to him, we entered also. And behold, I saw a throne, exceeding great, made of ivory, overlaid with pure gold. There were six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold. And twelve lions stood there upon the one side and on the other upon the six steps. And the top of the throne was round behind, and there were stays on either side of the place of the seat. And two physicians stood beside the stays.

And I saw the throne and him that sat upon it. His countenance was like the face of a man in

great trouble, bereft of friends and tortured with remorse. The skin of his face was rough and pale, and the leanness of his flesh caused his cheek bones to protrude high and hard against the skin, while the fierceness of his small black eyes, in their deep hollow sockets, sparkled and flashed forth like a demon in distress. He was clothed in white and scarlet and purple, and his crown sparkled with many a costly gem. But his body quivered with pain, as though he were set on fire of hell.[1] Before him this stalwart soldier knelt.

"Go thou," said he to this captain of his hosts, accompanying his words with a frantic, imperious gesture of his right hand, "and slay all the male children of Bethlehem from two years old and under. Spare not, neither in the city nor in the borders thereof. And cause thou the high-priest, the chief priests and all the rulers of the Jews to swear by their God allegiance to Cæsar, and to the king which he shall appoint to sit upon my throne after me. See thou to it; for the king hath heard how the rebellious Jews plot to gather together at his death to anoint for themselves a king in Bethlehem of the seed of David, and to establish his throne forever in Jerusalem, the city of their God. And they have caused the wise men of the east to mock me and put me to an open shame."[2]

He trembled as he spake, and swooned as he completed these words. The attendant physi-

[1] Joseph, Ant. xvii., 6, 5. [2] Matt. ii. 16.

cians hurriedly removed him to his couch and bathed him in a vessel of hot oil. It was supposed that he was dying, but when he heard the lamentable cry of his domestics, he revived.

"Have I swooned again?" exclaimed he, as he came to himself. "The Jews say that this malady hath been sent upon me of their God because I despise His laws.[1] Yet why should I, Herod the Great, king of all Judea and Samaria and Galilee and beyond Jordan, worship the God of the Jews rather than the gods of Rome, who gave me this kingdom? Rome ruleth the world. And I worship Rome. Thinkest thou, Hyrcanus," said he to his beloved physician, "that this loathsome disease hath come upon me from Jehovah, the God of Israel?"

"Thy disease, O king," replied Hyrcanus, "is no respecter of persons. It cometh upon all alike who bridle not their passions in youth. If thou hadst lived after the manner of Moses' law, thou wouldst have been but in thy prime at this thy present age. But the indiscretions of thy youth, thou canst not now amend. Why dost thou not remove thyself to some other land, where the gods perchance might help thee, seeing that the Jews are thine enemies? Thy servant doth know that to bathe in the hot springs which are at Callirrhoe beyond Jordan, is health to the bones and sweet to the soul.[2] Peradventure, the god of that land which thou hast redeemed from the king of Arabia, may there cause thy health to come again

[1] Joseph, Ant. xvii., 6, 5. [2] Joseph, Ant. xvii., 6, 5.

to thee as the flesh came again to Naaman, captain of the hosts of Syria, when he bathed in Jordan."[1]

"Thou speakest as one of the wise men, Hyrcanus," replied Herod. "Cause my chariot to be made ready for me, that we may go in haste to Callirrhoe beyond Jordan!"

As in a theatre one sees the curtain drop, presently to rise for another scene, so in a moment was I transferred from the king's palace in Jerusalem to the hippodrome in Jericho. Before me were gathered together all the leading Jews in Herod's kingdom; and in this enclosure they were imprisoned.[2]

Apart from his companions, with his face turned to the wall, his fingers running through his hair like a frightened prisoner momentarily expecting his execution, I saw one like unto Boaz of Bethlehem.

"He was born in the manger of my stable," I heard him say to himself. "Would to God I had gone back to Rebekah that night with the story I heard at the well, then would He have been born in my house! This evil hath come upon me because I was not moved by the pitiful cry of the mother of my Lord, when I saw her anguish as she cried, 'Anywhere will do for me if only I may find rest for my weary soul!' But we brought them into our home next day and cared for them the best we could. And on the eighth day the child was named Jesus. When

[1] 2 Kings v. 8–14. [2] Joseph, Ant. xvii., 6, 5.

He was forty days old, they took Him to the temple, according to the law, and when Simeon the scribe, and Anna the prophetess, saw the child, they took Him up in their arms and blessed God and blessed His parents, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.[1] It is said that an angel whispered His name in their ears and revealed this secret to them.

"And when He was nearly six months old, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem and inquired of Herod concerning Him. They came to Bethlehem, where the bright shining star stood above my house. They worshipped Him and gave Him gifts, and then departed to their homes by another way.[2] Then was Herod wroth, this vile and accursed king, and he sought to slay the child.[3] But the angel of the Lord came into my home by night, and Joseph and Mary fled into Egypt with the child, and so escaped out of his hand.[4] But Japtheh, poor Japtheh! How he loved his little son which Rachel his wife bore to him a year ago! At the cruel command of the captain of the king's host, a soldier snatched that darling boy out of his mother's arms, and with his sword slew the little one before her eyes. Wailing aloud in anguish, Rachel threw herself upon the ground and clasped the bloody form of her gasping child, and would have died there of a broken heart, had

[1] Luke ii. 21–39.
[2] Matt. ii. 1–12.
[3] Matt. ii. 16.
[4] Matt. ii. 13, 14.

not Rebekah forced her away from the scene.[1] The soldiers thought this was the child which the wise men came to see. God do so to me and mine if I betray the secret of how Joseph fled into Egypt, lest Herod follow Him into the land of Pharaoh and slay Him there."

"Dost thou know," asked the angel of me, "why these Jews are assembled here and the cause of their sore distress? Seest thou the couch in yonder mansion, with Hyrcanus at its side? Draw near and thou shalt hear what the king saith."

"I have sent for thee, Salome," said a weak and broken voice, "because thou art my sister, and I have found thee and thy husband, Alexas, faithful in all things. The warm baths of Callirrhoe have done me no good, and I shall die in a little time, so great are my pains. But what principally troubleth me is that I shall die without such mourning as men usually expect at a king's death.[2] Thou knowest how the Jews have hated me, although I built for them at my own expense such a costly temple as Solomon in all his glory could not surpass.[3] I thought by that large gift to secure the lasting friendship of them and of their God, so they would honor me in all things and call their building after my name as a memorial of me. They have accepted the gift but despised the giver.[4] And I know the temper of their minds how they will rejoice in my death.

[1] Matt. ii. 18.
[2] Joseph, Ant. xvii., 6, 5.
[3] Joseph, Ant. xv., 11, 1–3.
[4] Joseph, Ant. xvii., 6, 1.

But I greatly desire to have the voice of mourning heard in the land, as is usual at a king's death. Therefore have I called for the chief men of the Jews in all my dominions, and they are imprisoned in the hippodrome. And I adjure thee, Salome, by the kindness due me of my kindred, and by thy faith in the God of Israel, that thou wilt not hinder me of the honorable mourning at my funeral which I have devised. For in that moment when I give up the ghost, before yet my death is declared to the multitudes, thou shalt command the soldiers to slay these Jews in the hippodrome and then there shall be such mourning throughout the land as no king ever hath had before me. And the Jews will therefore cease to regard my death as a thing very desirable and exceedingly acceptable to them."

Salome heard and promised.[1] Then she withdrew and wept. I looked once more upon that wretched face, those hideous eyes, that fiendish spirit, and turned away in disgust.

Then said the angel unto me, "Behold, I am here. This shall not be. When thou hearest the wail of Hyrcanus and the domestics beating their breasts, then will I put it in the heart of Salome to open these gates and let the Jews go free.[2] She shall be to them as Esther the queen in the palace of Shushan."[3]

While he was yet speaking to me, behold, I heard the wail of Hyrcanus, the rushing of

[1] Joseph, Ant. xvii., 6, 5. [2] Joseph, Ant. xvii., 8, 2. [3] Esth. iv. 14.

Salome's feet to the gates, the suppressed shouts of the fleeing Jews, the falling into line of the excited soldiers, the confusion of the maddened centurions, and I knew that Herod was dead and that the calm and peaceful Salome was in command.

"Didst thou not say," queried I of the angel, "that I should see the king in three scenes? Behold, I have seen but two and now he is dead. And after death cometh the judgment. Shall I see him then in glory?"

He answered me not. But instantly the scene was changed and I saw a great multitude such as no man could number. The procession moved from Jericho to Herodium, eight furlongs distant, in such pomp as Judea had never seen. The body was carried upon a golden bier embroidered with very precious stones of great variety, and was covered over with purple. He had a diadem upon his head and above it a crown of gold.[1] He had also a sceptre in his right hand. About the bier were his sons and his numerous relatives; next to these were the soldiers arranged in the following order:

First of all went his guards; then the band of Thracians; and after them the Germans; and next the band of Galatians, every one in their habiliments of war; and behind these marched the whole army in the same manner as they used to go out to war, and as they used to be put in array by the centurions. Following the soldiers

[1] Joseph, Ant. xvii., 8, 3.

were five hundred of his domestics, carrying spices. And after these came the multitudes from Jerusalem and all Judea, from Samaria and Galilee, and from beyond Jordan.

And I said unto the angel, "This indeed is a glorious scene: for the excellency of his funeral surpasses the greatness of his life."

Whereupon the angel turned his face toward the land of Egypt and exclaimed, "Arise, Joseph, and take the young child and His mother and come again into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child's life."[1]

[1] Matt. ii. 20.

V

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

"BEHOLD I show thee a mystery," exclaimed the angel as he turned and fixed his beautiful, all-seeing eyes on my inmost thoughts, and seemed to be searching for the latent powers of my young and undeveloped soul. "Oh the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God," he continued. "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out![1] Who hath known the mind of the Lord? As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than the ways of the children of men and His thoughts than their thoughts."[2]

"Behold I shew thee a mystery, yea, it shall be the mystery of mysteries! Thou shalt see a great multitude, greater by far than this which thou didst see at Herod's funeral. And in the midst thereof, thou shalt see a prophet greater than any priest, seer or king ever born into the world before him.[3] Then will I show thee seven mysteries, and when thou hast seen them, thou shalt see my face no more until thou dost cross the bridge of Sighs and Sorrows in a midnight darkness denser than any that hath ever tried thy soul."

[1] Rom. xi. 33. [2] Isa. lv. 9. [3] Matt. xi. 11.

"Seest thou these broken walls? They are crumbling monuments of an ancient building. Hast thou never read of the school of the prophets that once flourished in Jericho in the days of Elijah the prophet?[1] These are the old foundations. This is the very spot where Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan.[2] But Elisha would not stay and they two went on. Out of the building which once stood upon these foundations, went the fifty sons of the prophets who stood over against them afar off, because they knew that Elijah was to be taken away that day. Yonder is the mountain-top where they stood and saw the chariot of fire as he ascended."[3]

"Close now thine eyes and instantly thou shalt be with me beyond Jordan where Elijah was caught up into heaven.[4] And in that same place will I also be taken away from thee."

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye as it seemed to me, I was transferred to another scene. Above me floated one little cloud, the only cloud in all the sky. And it was like unto a chariot of glory drawn by twelve white horses, fashioned to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. It had come from toward Mount Carmel, like incense from Elijah's altar when there, in the days of Ahab, he proved the God of Israel and slew the priests of Baal. In the distance, it appeared no larger than a man's hand; and its course was toward the mountains of Moab and the wilder-

[1] 2 Kings ii. 5. [2] 2 Kings ii. 6. [3] 2 Kings ii. 15. [4] 2 Kings ii. 11.

ness of Judea. Suddenly its form was changed while I gazed upon it, until now it appeared as a dove with white wings extended, resting above the Jordan and looking down into its waters.

Underneath it upon either bank, I saw a multitude which no man could number, of all nations and tongues. Jerusalem and all Judea were there.[1] From Samaria and Galilee and the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, from Egypt and beyond the river, from Asia and the isles of the sea, they had come. In the midst of the river, I saw one dressed in camel's hair with a leathern girdle about his loins.[2] The hair of his head was as the hair of a Nazarite, long and black and covering his shoulders down to the arms. I saw not the countenance of his face, for it was set steadfastly upon One whose feet were entering the waters from the other shore. But I heard the deep tones of his stentorian voice proclaim, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me."[3]

"Suffer it now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness,"[4] replied a voice inexpressibly sweet.

When the angel heard this sweet-toned voice, he smiled and turned to me and said, "This is the fairest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely. This is the Mystery of mysteries."

I looked again. The whole multitude, with excited faces and bated breath, gazed upon that scene in silence. And when He was baptized, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God

[1] Mark i. 5. [2] Matt. iii. 4. [3] Matt. iii. 14. [4] Matt. iii. 15.

descended like a dove, and the dove-like cloud came down upon Him. And a voice out of heaven proclaimed, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."[1]

Immediately the multitudes hastened to disperse. Up and down the valley and over the hills they went, every one eager to tell the glad tidings to all they met in the way, and to friends in their distant homes.

"Where is the child that was born in Bethlehem a few days ago?" queried I of the angel.

"Behold I show thee a mystery," was his reply. And as he repeated these words, I remembered what he had said to me in Jericho and kept silent.

"The message of the man clothed in camel's hair," the angel went on to say, "is the first of the seven mysteries; and the ordinance which he administereth is like unto it. The wisest men of the world will differ widely for many centuries concerning the significance of these two mysteries. The dove which thou didst see descending, and the voice which thou didst hear out of heaven, are other two mysteries which thou canst better understand when thou hast learned to know and to love the One for whose sake these came. To thee it seemeth but a little while since thou didst hear the choir of angels chanting their glad psalms on Bethlehem's plains. But thirty years have passed since then, and He whom thou hast seen to-day is the meek and lowly

[1] Matt. iii. 17.

child, born that night in the city of David. Hast thou never read how in heaven time shall be no more? that with the Lord a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years?[1] Whilst thou art with me, thou canst not measure time: for I am in eternity. That which thou hast seen since thou hast been with me, thou hast seen from the standpoint of eternity. Here is wisdom which to thy human mind is unfathomable mystery."

As he spoke these words, he seemed to push me out into the whirl of ages past, and centuries yet to come, until I became dizzy with the thought and trembled with the strain. I winked at centuries and they were gone; I thought of cities and I was there. I kept pace with the thoughts and feelings of angels for but a moment, and I fell prostrate upon the earth, overcome by the strain of a tension far too great for the sinews of the human mind to endure.

"Arise," said the angel, as he took me by the hand and lifted me up, "for I have yet two other mysteries to show thee before I go. Thou didst desire to know the child-life of thy Lord. And thou hast seen it. Such things as thou dost remember, thou mayst write down for thy friends."

"Surely thou dost now mock me!" I exclaimed. "For when have I seen my Lord till now, and how sayst thou that I may write of His child-life?"

"Thou hast seen the child-life of thy Lord, my

[1] 2 Pet. iii. 8.

son," replied the angel, "from the time He was born in Bethlehem unto this day. But that which thou hast seen hath not been written down upon thy memory. It hath pleased God to obliterate from the memory of the world, the child-life of its Lord. Once thou didst see Him in the temple when, at twelve years of age, He reasoned with the doctors of the law about His Father's business.[1] And only such events in His life as pertain to His Father's business, doth the Father desire to leave on the records of men. The mystery of His suddenly shining forth out of oblivion is well-pleasing to the children of men, and in perfect harmony with the revealed character of God.[2] For, as in the beginning, God created the sun, not first as an infant like a star, afterward to grow into its full stature, so likewise He hath ordained that the Sun of righteousness should suddenly shine forth upon the world, not as a progressive growth, from childhood to maturity, but as a flashing forth of the true light of the world in the glory of His full strength."

"The glory of the child-life of the Lord is that He was subject unto His human parents,[3] as every true child ought to be.[4] But now that He hath come to the age when He is no longer subject to His earthly parents,[5] He is ready to enter upon His Messianic work. For henceforth no human being, not even His mother, can claim the right to direct His footsteps,[6] and the Father

[1] Luke ii. 41-51. [2] Mal. iii. 1. [3] Luke ii. 51.
[4] Col. iii. 20. [5] John ix. 21. [6] Mark iii. 31-35.

will speak with Him face to face, instead of through the guardianship of earthly parents, or the instrumentality of other men.[1] He hath stepped to the front and suddenly become the head of the human race. And as in Adam all die, so in Him shall all be made alive.[2]

"Hast thou never read how David, His father, was three times anointed king, once at the request of God and twice at the request of the people? First by Samuel the prophet,[3] then by Judah,[4] and finally by all Israel,[5] was David anointed king. Now therefore He who is to sit upon David's throne, shall likewise be thrice anointed king. For as the Spirit descended upon David when, at the command of God, Samuel poured the anointing oil upon his head, so thou hast seen the Spirit descend upon this Son of David when He was baptized in Jordan. And He hath become the Anointed One, in whom the Father is well pleased. And it shall come to pass that in Jerusalem, the people will be assembled with one accord in one place, on the day of Pentecost, requesting that the throne of David be restored again to Israel. And then for the second time shall He be anointed King of the Jews.[6]

"Finally at Cæsarea not many days afterward, at the request of the Gentiles, this Son of David shall be anointed for the third time, not as the king of Israel alone, but as king of all the world,

[1] John viii. 28. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 22. [3] 1 Sam. xvi. 13.
[4] 2 Sam. ii. 4. [5] 2 Sam. v. 3. [6] Acts ii. 33.

King of kings and Lord of lords.[1] Then shall He sit upon the throne of David, His father; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."[2]

"Dost thou remember what David did when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, immediately after his anointing by Samuel?"

"Yea, good master, I remember," I replied. "He went forth alone to meet the champion of the Philistines. And with a smooth stone hurled from his shepherd's sling, he brought the mighty Goliath to the ground in the presence of the shouting armies of Israel."[3]

"Thou hast well said, my child," the angel replied, "and I will now show thee the seventh mystery, in which thou shalt see the Son of Mary hurl a smooth stone at a mightier Goliath than David ever saw, and put him to such a headlong flight as will make all the angels of heaven shout for joy."[4]

"Seest thou yonder rocky height, a mountain exceeding high, where the fifty sons of the prophets stood to behold Elijah taken up into heaven?"

I looked and behold, upon that mountain-top I beheld one clothed as an angel of light, talking earnestly with Him upon whom the Spirit had come at His baptism.[5] I saw the Son of Mary, with His face careworn and weary, as though He had fasted for forty days and forty nights.[6] And I saw the one who, as an archangel out of

[1] Acts x. 44–46. [2] Heb. x. 12, 13. [3] 1 Sam. xvii. 1–58.
[4] Matt. iv. 10, 11. [5] Luke iv. 5. [6] Luke iv. 2.

heaven, pointed with pride to all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. And I heard him say to this meek and lowly child of Bethlehem, "All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me."[1]

The eyes of the Master sparkled. The countenance of His face was changed, as when one recognizes a mortal enemy in disguise. He that is entitled to be worshipped doth not buy worship. He that is entitled to be trusted doth not urge men to distrust others. He that standeth at the right hand of God, doth not himself seek to outrival God.

"It is written,"[2] said the Master;—and as He said it, I saw the form of His antagonist quiver as if conscious of the Master's power to hurl at him the smooth words of some hard text with fatal effect. "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve."

And as He spake these words, the crown vanished from the head of His antagonist, and the glory which he had assumed faded away. And I saw the prince of demons, with mask torn off, trembling before the Son of Mary and fleeing from before His presence at the Conqueror's command: "Get thee hence, Satan."

Then I saw a multitude of angels descend and minister unto Him. And I heard their music, as it was on Bethlehem's plains that night when the shepherds kept watch over their flocks in the fields of Boaz.

[1] Matt. iv. 9. [2] Matt. iv. 10.

"With this multitude of heavenly host, I also go away," said the angel unto me. "For now that the Son of God hath come into His kingdom and entered upon His Messianic work, thou must follow Him. He alone hath the words of eternal life.[1] Hear Him."[2]

Instantly He vanished out of my sight. And as I looked round about me, I saw the man dressed in camel's hair with a leathern girdle about his loins, pointing to the opposite bank of the river and saying of the Son of Mary, as he came forth out of the wilderness, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world![3] This is the Son of God."[4]

As he said these words, he turned and looked toward me. And as I beheld his face, lo, it was like the face of the man I had seen in the cave of Horeb who was upon the rock in the wilderness, the Rabbi who held before my closing eyes the magical wand of Moses. And I heard a hypnotizing voice exclaim, "The second vision is past, behold, the third is at hand."

[1] John vi. 68. [2] Matt. xvii. 5. [3] John i. 29. [4] John i. 34.

Third Vision

I

THE MARRIAGE FEAST IN CANA

As a mother hushes her waking child and induces him again to sleep, so the voice of my enchanter carried me on into my dream, and brought me to another scene. Before me passed a maiden, clad in robes of white, embroidered with threads of gold. Her hair was flowing in long, beautiful tresses of silken black, and she was decked with many costly jewels. Her face was covered with a long veil, and she wore a peculiar girdle, such as belongeth to a bride's attire in Galilee. At her side was the bridegroom in festive dress, a garland, or nuptial crown, upon his head, and he was redolent of myrrh and frankincense and all powders of the merchant. Before them was a band of musicians, and accompanying them was a host of glad and merrymaking friends. I followed them from the bride's home to the home of her husband, where a large company of invited guests awaited the arrival of the procession for an evening of feasting, amusement and great joy.[1]

[1] Smith's Dict. Bible, Art. Marriage.

I saw two men and two matronly-looking women, seated to themselves in a group in one of the inner chambers, discussing some serious question with an expression of radiant joy very unlike the joy of frivolity about them. The laughter of the gay young maidens, the propounding and solving of riddles, the hurrying feet of servants, the inspiring strains of stringed instruments, the mingled voices of chatting guests—all these things were but incidentally observed by the dignified group in the upper room. In their presence I paused.

"Did Elisabeth's son proclaim before all the people that my son is indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God?" queried a sweet-voiced woman, whose face I now recognized as that of the beautiful maid of Nazareth whom the angel accompanied to Jutta.

"In very truth thou sayest it," replied the two men, simultaneously.

"And have ye, my two sons, become the disciples of the son of my sister?" inquired Salome, whom I now recognized as the young woman who thirty years previous sat with Mary under the olive-tree, at the fountain of Nazareth, and spoke of her baby boy John, in whose cherub face she said then she thought she could sometimes see visions of a new Jerusalem.

"Mother," replied John, "let it not grieve thee that thy sister's son hath become our Master and our Lord. Perchance it may be that when He cometh into His kingdom, He may grant that thy

two sons may sit the one on His right hand and the other on His left.[1] When our father removed his dwelling-place from Nazareth in the mountains, to Bethsaida by the sea, he thought to make us fishermen. For all these years we have served with him day and night and never have we at any time transgressed his commandment as thou thyself knowest. Andrew and Simon, sons of Jonas, our comrades in life and partners in business,[2] were with us at the Jordan, hearing the words of the prophet, and searching the Scriptures daily to know what or what manner of time the Spirit through the prophets did signify, and what the manner of the coming of the Christ should be. I was standing by the son of Zacharias, meditating upon these things, and Andrew stood beside me, when lo, Jesus, our cousin, passed by.[3] And the prophet, pointing to him, proclaimed to us and to all the people, that this is He of whom the prophets spake, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, the long promised Shiloh, the Christ that should come.

"Immediately I went and found James; and Andrew found his brother, Simon, whom Jesus hath surnamed Peter; and we abode with Jesus that day. As we walked along, Jesus saw Philip and called him to be a disciple also.[4] Philip found Nathaniel[5] under a fig-tree, and brought him to Jesus. Nathaniel was born and brought

[1] Matt. xx. 20, 21. [2] Luke v. 10. [3] John i. 35-42.
[4] John i. 43. [5] John i. 48.

up in this city of Cana, and we came together with him to this wedding."

"What sign have ye seen Him do, to cause you to believe in Him?" queried Salome of her sons.

"We have seen no sign, mother," replied James. "We believe in Him because of the testimony of the son of Zacharias. For all the people hold John the son of Zacharias as a prophet."

"If Jesus were indeed the Christ," replied Salome, "would He use His time in attending weddings and countenancing amusements and conforming to social requirements?[1] Is this the mission of the Messiah?"

"Thou art slow of heart, my sister, to believe," replied Mary. "Was not the home created before the nation? And if the nation is to be saved, must not the homes first be sanctified and honored and blessed? Hath not God created us with a desire for happiness, amusement, society, and conjugal relationships? Is not religion simply the means ordained of God, whereby these secular things are sanctified, or used rightly, and made to glorify our Creator? I would rejoice if my son could see fit to honor the holy ordinance of marriage, and all the joy and frivolity that such an occasion bringeth, by revealing the first public sign of His ministry at such a time as this."[2]

Hardly had she finished speaking when the

[1] John ii. 1–3. [2] John ii. 11.

bridegroom's mother appeared. And I saw in her one of the fair young women who thirty years ago accompanied Mary on her visit to Elisabeth. Her face was now flushed, and tears were trickling down her care-worn cheeks.

"The wine hath failed," she sobbed. "What can we do? The hour is late, we cannot buy. The ruler of the feast is angry, and the guests will laugh us to scorn."

Mary quietly withdrew. Salome and her two sons followed. Together they found Jesus and His other disciples reclining at the table. Mary whispered in His ear, "They have no wine."[1]

"Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come,"[2] He replied.

Beckoning the servants to come hither, Mary said unto them, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."[3]

"Fill the waterpots with water," He commanded.[4]

And they filled them up to the brim.

"Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast," He said.[5]

And they bare it. And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was, he called the bridegroom and said unto him,

"Every man setteth on first the good wine, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now."[6]

[1] John ii. 3. [2] John ii. 4. [3] John ii. 5.
[4] John ii. 7. [5] John ii. 8. [6] John ii. 10.

Then were the disciples amazed, and His mother and Salome rejoiced. And the miracle of that hour was the topic of investigation and remark for all the guests from that time forward.

"Many weddings have I attended," remarked a middle-aged matron, whose noble bearing, rich apparel, and intellectual appearance betokened her high social rank; "and many hard riddles have I heard during their festive evening hours, but never a problem like this have I met before."

"Joanna," exclaimed Mary, "I have known of thee, and thou hast known of me since the day we journeyed together from Nazareth to Jutta. These thirty years have brought their changes, and thou art now the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, the nobleman of Capernaum.[1] In thy husband's counsel, the king doth trust. And thou hast been the counsellor and help-meet of thy husband. Thy mind hath been greatly occupied with the affairs of the kingdom. Thou art rich and thou art the honored wife of a nobleman. I married a poor man and I am left a poor widow. And yet, Joanna, I haved attained unto the secret of a happy life. For thirty years my mind hath been occupied with the affairs of the kingdom of heaven. The life of my son, in whom is all my hope, hath been filled with many mysteries which I have pondered long and am pondering still in the secret depths of my heart.[2] If thou canst altogether understand Him,

[1] Luke viii. 3. [2] Luke ii. 19, 51.

thou canst comprehend the mystery of mysteries, and thou shalt purchase for thyself a great reward.

"The water turned into wine is but a problem small compared with other manifestations of His glory which I have seen, and of which but few others have ever heard.

"Thou hast a son, Joanna, and thou knowest that thy Bar-Chuza is to thee the joy and wealth of thy life. Moreover, thy son, I have heard say, is betrothed to Judith, the daughter of Zacchæus of Jericho, an only child, the heiress of all her father's great possessions.[1] He doeth well. I rejoice with thee. And I would that thou mightest know my son and partake with me in the source of inspiration and comfort more precious than silver or gold or houses or lands. He seeketh a glory which perisheth not, but abideth unto eternal life."[2]

"A good and true mother, art thou, Mary," replied Joanna. "And I honor thee for thy kind dealings with me and for the good fellowship thou hast with thy son. If to others He proveth to be the source of joy He is to thee, then such a life as His may bring more glory than an earthly king. I would that thou couldst return with me to Capernaum and abide in my home until after the Passover. Thou art a wise counsellor and keepeth secrets well. And I have much to say to thee concerning things I have seen in my dreams, things hard to be understood, visions

[1] Luke xix. 2. [2] John vi. 27.

magnified anew since I came this night into the presence of thy son and saw this miracle which He did."

"It shall be unto thee even according to thy request," replied Mary. "For it hath been arranged already for me to accompany my son and His disciples to Capernaum on the morrow.[1] But we can abide there not many days."

[1] John ii. 12.

II

PUBLICANS AND SINNERS

As the stereopticon throws upon the screen a view in which, while the central figure remains the same, the first surroundings fade away and a new environment appears, so while I gazed upon the wonderful face of Mary, there came before me another vision. Her beautiful eyes were still fixed upon the cultured face of Joanna, but the scene was changed from the bridegroom's home in Cana to the nobleman's palace in Capernaum. Simon and Andrew, James and John, had disappeared from sight, following Jesus over the hills from Capernaum to Jerusalem to keep the Passover.[1]

"Thou hast said that I am rich and perhaps I am, in the sight of publicans and noblemen who measure greatness and worth according to the bulk of gold and silver that we possess," spake Joanna in the attentive ear of Mary; "but to me, riches are but little worth except when used to make others happy. And not even then, unless the riches are obtained righteously. My husband is Herod's steward, and we have seen so much oppression, so much robbery under forms of law, so little regard for suffering fellow-beings,

[1] John ii. 13-iii. 22.

that my soul hath longed to flee away to some quiet little mountain home, where the wail of the oppressed multitudes cannot reach my ears, nor the cry of hungry children be heard in the streets. Though I am here surrounded by wealth and luxury, I am wretched, yea, utterly miserable. Ever since we journeyed together from Nazareth to Jutta, my daily prayer hath been that our God would raise up a saviour strong enough to redeem this down-trodden people.

"I have fondly hoped that my son, Bar-Chuza, might be such an one. He knoweth his mother's heart, his father's resources, and the national problems to be solved. But his heart is turned away by the attractions of wealth easily won, and the selfish pleasures of a life of ease to follow. He is indeed betrothed to Judith, the only child of the wealthy Zacchæus, of Jericho. The world considereth him fortunate, and perhaps he is, for Judith is a charming maiden. But thou knowest, Mary, and I know, that Zacchæus hath obtained his money by robbing the people according to law, as a conscienceless publican is privileged to do.[1] A highwayman is a robber contrary to law. That is the only difference between a highwayman and a publican. I would not like to have my son take the daughter of a highwayman to wife, even though she be as rich as Crœsus and as beautiful as Cleopatra."

"Hast thou never observed," inquired Mary, "that oftentimes a daughter hath more inher-

[1] Smith's Dict. Bible, Art. Publican.

itance in a wise and godly mother than in a rich and wicked father? Dost thou know her mother?"

"Yea, she is the daughter of Philetus, an Israelite in whom there was no guile. Her pathway, like my own, hath many thorns among its roses. Six months ago, I was the honored guest in her home, and I saw a scene which hath haunted me ever since and hath made my heart sick.

"Dost thou remember Hananiah and his poor blind boy, on whose camels we journeyed from Nazareth to Jutta? His wife, thou dost remember, was servant to Zacharias and Elisabeth, who died nearly fifteen years ago. After their death, Hananiah found it difficult to earn a living for his afflicted family, oftentimes being out of employment and reduced to abject poverty. When John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, this poor family moved to the vicinity of Jericho, hoping to earn a living by serving the multitudes which came to hear John. While engaged in this work, he gave some valuable information to a chief priest who came from Jerusalem to interview John. And for this he was rewarded with a position in the temple, where it would be his lot to sweep the floors and scrub the steps.

"He was passing through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem when Zacchæus, reclining on an easy couch under the shade of a large sycamore tree in his own front yard, lifted up his eyes and beheld him. Immediately Zacchæus sprang forward and inquired who it was that was depart-

ing. Upon learning that it was Hananiah, he inquired for his tax receipt. Hananiah's face flushed red with anger, but he evidently labored hard to speak pleasantly as he replied:

"'Zacchæus, I am a poor man, as thou dost know, and all that I have is what thou dost see on these two camels. My poor wife and blind son are, as thou seest, in want of clothes fit to go up to Jerusalem. The priests have employed me to sweep the temple and scrub the steps. And if my wages shall be sufficient to get my wife and blind boy something good to eat and wear, I shall be satisfied. I am penniless now. Thou dost not need to press thy claim against me, seeing that thou are rich.'

"Having said this, he urged the camels to move on. But Zacchæus in the name of the law, commanded him to stop. Throwing back his shoulders, and tossing up his head with an air of a despot, Zacchæus proclaimed:

"'I have had to pay a thousand talents for the revenue of this city; and if I allow all the poor people to go untaxed, I will surely lose by my bargain. My claim is just. The law alloweth it to me. I am only demanding my lawful rights. If thy family lacketh for bread, what is that to me? See thou to that. If thou hast not the silver, the law alloweth me to take the first choice part of the grain of the field, the fruit of the tree, or the worth of my claim in household goods. Unload the camels.'

"Upon hearing this, Hananiah was seized with

a fit of anger that could not longer be suppressed. He stooped, clutched a stone and would have hurled it at him, had not his wife, seeing what was about to happen, placed herself between them and begged him to do no violence. Throwing her arms about his neck, she wept aloud, saying,

"'What will become of me and my poor blind son, if thou art sent in chains to Rome as a prisoner for assaulting a Roman officer? We can be happy, though poor, if thou art with us. Let the contemptible publican have his heart's content, even if he taketh all we have!'

"Hananiah began to write down an inventory of his goods.

"'Unload the camels, I want none of thine inventory; I will see for myself what thy possessions are!' commanded the uncompromising voice of Zacchæus.

"Every package was untied and every article carefully examined. The humiliated man and his wife laid all their household goods at Zacchæus' feet, while, with writing tablet in hand, he assessed every bundle at a value to please himself. Hid away in the corner of one small box, he found a beautiful gold ring. He laid it aside and promised to value it by and by. And it so happened that the value of that ring and the amount of taxes assessed were exactly the same.

"'This gold ring exactly settleth the bill,' said Zacchæus.

"'That ring thou canst not have!' exclaimed

Hananiah, springing forward in a furious rage. 'That ring thou canst not have!' he repeated. 'It is the one treasure that my wife holdeth dearer than all else we have. It was given her with the betrothal vow, consecrated at the marriage altar, sanctified by her parents' blessing, associated with all the sacred memories of a lifetime. Thou shalt not have that ring! I will indict thee to the magistrates!'

"Zacchæus laughed. It was a cold, heartless, sneering, victorious laugh.

"'If I receive the amount of these taxes within the next thirty days, the ring can be redeemed,' was the only reply that Zacchæus made, as he walked slowly away toward his easy couch.

"And as the camels passed out of sight, I saw the woman weeping as if her heart would break, and Hananiah calling upon God to have vengeance upon publicans in the day of judgment.

"'Zacchæus, Zacchæus!' exclaimed Miriam, the daughter of Philetus, as her husband entered the house, 'how couldst thou break the heart of that poor woman? Thou hast been a good husband to me and I would not interfere with thy business, but I would rather die poor and beloved, than rich and despised. I would rather have given that poor woman my own betrothal ring, than to have seen thee take away hers. If this be the cost of wealth, then give me poverty!'

"To this outburst of feeling, Zacchæus coolly replied, 'I had a perfect right to tax them. The Roman government expects me to do it. Their

blind son ought to be made to beg for a living, as other blind men do. The idea of his threatening to indict me to the magistrates! If he were to take the matter to them, I presume that I could even sell his wife into slavery to pay the bill. The judges are the very men from whom I buy my office. They will not decide a case against me. I have paid a thousand talents of silver for the revenue of this city, and I mean to farm it so as to get three thousand talents out of it.

"'I know that the Jews and everybody else hate me. They cannot hate me any worse if I extort three thousand talents, than they will do if I extort nothing at all. The truth is, I am bound to be hated anyway. I expect that. I went into this business, not because I admire it, but because there is money in it. I want to be rich. The rich are the beloved and honored, the poor are the despised and trampled upon. It always hath been so and always will be so. If thou, Miriam, couldst see as much of this world as I see, thou wouldst not be so tender-hearted.

"'See how that wicked Caiaphas hath been made high-priest, because he is son-in-law of Annas,[1] who is rich. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, being rich men, have managed to get into the Sanhedrim and to obtain distinguished honorary degrees. Gold and silver are the powers that count in this world. The chief priests claim that the Messiah will one day come. The

[1] John xviii. 13.

fact is that they have been expecting Him to come for five hundred years. But I believe that their religion amounteth to nothing at all, except to enrich the rulers in Jerusalem.

"'So anxious are they for the shekels, that they have turned the temple itself, the very house of God, into a place of merchandise, and made it a den of thieves. The priests rent stalls to rich men at exorbitant prices. These rich men have an understanding with the priests that no offering shall be accepted by any priest unless it is given in the regular half-shekel of the sanctuary. They insist on the one kind of currency and the exact change. These rich men buy from the priests all these half-shekels, thereby securing a monopoly of that kind of change. Then they charge even a poor, blind man an exorbitant fee for changing his coin into the temple currency. That is religion! The men who do that make long prayers on the street-corners and wear broad phylacteries[1] and claim to be holy. We publicans are not such robbers as they are. People everywhere take all the advantage they can get. But if the Messiah should come, I hope He will suddenly descend into His temple and shake off the hypocrisy from those who are in authority there.[2] Then will we publicans and sinners rush unto Him and confess our sins also.'"

"Much that Zacchæus saith is true," remarked Mary, as Joanna paused. "Those in authority are blind; and those not in authority are op-

[1] Matt. xxiii 1–8. [2] John ii. 15.

pressed; and Satan hath bound[1] many people of this generation both hands and feet, and leadeth them on to drink the dregs of the cup of the wrath to come."

"Yea, I have thought of it oftentimes," replied Joanna, "how never before in the history of the world were so many people possessed with devils as now. In the village of Magdala near by, is a remarkable woman bearing thy name. The people know her as Mary of Magdala or Mary Magdalene. It would be hard to find a woman with a nobler heart than hers, if only she would let wines alone. She can be very kind and good and helpful, but there are times when she is possessed of devils. And while they hold dominion over her, she is the most wretched creature in all the world. Bar-Chuza saith that there are seven devils in her and that they are named, Strong-drink, Profanity, Licentiousness, Robbery, Lying, Ill-temper and Despair. He saith that Strong-drink is the captain of the guard, who nearly always induceth the others to follow him whithersoever he goeth. Everything hath been done to reclaim that woman that ingenuity can devise, but she groweth worse, until now she hath been given up to die an outcast.[2] She brought the grey heads of her father and mother down to their graves in shame and sorrow. The last words that her mother spake were said in prayer to God for her poor unfortunate daughter. But prayers do not seem to be

[1] Luke xiii. 16. [2] Luke viii. 2.

heard any more as they used to be. The devil reigneth on earth.

"On the other side of this sea, in the country of the Gadarenes, there is a man who cannot be bound or governed, who maketh his home in the graveyards and the mountains. He foameth at the mouth and mightily terrifieth the people. The people say he is possessed of a legion or more of devils.[1]

"And over here toward Tyre and Sidon liveth a woman, whom I once knew well when she was young. She lived in Syria, but married a worthless man in Phœnicia. And I call her now the Syro-Phœnician woman. She hath a daughter grievously vexed with a devil.[2]

"So many people are possessed that the like hath never been seen before in Galilee. I think it happeneth so because these people were many of them born into the world at the very time when Herod, whom they call the Great, but who rather should be called an incarnate devil, was carrying on such unheard-of wickedness in his kingdom. With such a fiend constantly before the eyes of the public, the laws of heredity would bring forth such a generation, possessed with devils."

While Joanna was yet speaking, Bar-Chuza arrived, having just returned from the feast of the passover in Jerusalem. He came by way of Jericho. Joanna arose and went forth to meet him.

[1] Mark v. 1–19. [2] Mark vii. 25, 26.

III

JESUS BECOMING FAMOUS

"My son bringeth tidings of a great sensation in Jerusalem and Jericho," said Joanna to Mary, as she entered the room where Mary had been left alone and where, taking advantage of her loneliness, she had reclined upon an easy couch for restful meditation. "And I have brought him in unto thee, that thou mayest hear from his own lips the interesting things which he hath seen."

"Peace be unto thee, Bar-Chuza," exclaimed Mary, saluting him. "What tidings, my son, dost thou bring from Judea?"

"Thy son, Jesus, hath turned Jerusalem upside down," replied Bar-Chuza. "He made Him a scourge of cords, went into the temple and cast out all that sold sheep and oxen, poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables.[1] The chief priests and rulers were excited and put to confusion as never before. They would have laid hands on Him, but when they saw the miracles which He did as though He were God come down out of heaven, they feared Him and knew not what to do."

"Dost thou mean to say that my son was furi-

[1] John ii. 13–25.

ous and threatened in wrath and indignation to do violence to the merchants in the temple, and thus break the peace and laws of the land? It is so very unlike Him to manifest a disposition of that kind. I never knew Him to speak harshly to any one. His heart is always full of love and sympathy. Art thou sure that He was angry and violent?"

"I was standing in the temple when He entered," replied Bar-Chuza. "I saw His face and heard His voice. And I can testify truly that His countenance was as peaceful as the sunshine, and His voice as sweet as the music of angels. It was the gentleness of His spirit that the chief priests could not withstand, and the searching power of His eyes that threw the merchants into a panic. It was done on this wise:

"A poor widow and her two children came in to worship. They brought a beautiful lamb, proudly expecting to offer it for their sacrifice. As they entered the enclosure, the examining officer pointed to a little scar behind one of its ears. Though he was assured that the scar came from a cord by which the little boy had led it to Jerusalem, he persisted in condemning it as unfit for sacrifice. He advised the woman to purchase a lamb from the merchants in the temple. Her protest and tears availed her nothing. She sold the lamb for a few farthings to an outside dealer, and with the proceeds she was able to purchase a dove and offer it as the sacrifice of the poor. While she was at the altar offering the

dove, I saw the lamb which she had sold outside, brought into one of the merchants' stalls within the temple and sold at an exorbitant price, on the unqualified assertion that it was the most perfect lamb in the market. Thus the people were being imposed upon and cheated on every side by these merchants, officers, chief priests and rulers, who were evidently allied together as a den of robbers, dividing the profits among themselves. Many people came to Nicodemus, the official teacher of Israel,[1] to know why it was that such proceedings were allowed in the holy place. The temple was the noisiest place in the city, with hundreds of merchants advertising their wares and soliciting patronage in the shrill, boisterous tones of a dozen different languages. And these merchants were assured of priestly protection in whatever business was transacted fairly or unfairly.

"Jesus seemeth to have the power to read the thoughts of men. He did not need that any one should tell Him of the secret bargains between these merchants and the rulers. When He came into the temple, He told the examining officer how this poor widow and several others had been treated. The officer besought Him to pass on. But Jesus began to expose the iniquity of that man's life, and kept on revealing His real nature, until the officer ran away from His presence. Jesus then quietly approached the merchant nearest Him and began to tell aloud all the secrets

[1] John iii. 10.

of that man's iniquity. A crowd was listening very attentively until the merchant became so excited that he rushed for the door and, in his hurry to get away, he overturned a money changer's table, which came near getting the two merchants into a fight between themselves. Jesus approached the next merchant in the same pleasant manner and began to read the secret thoughts of his heart and to publish his secret sins. Immediately there was a general stampede for the door among all the merchants, tables were overthrown and broken, and the money poured out on the floor. Jesus was not angry; He did not break the peace; no one preferred a charge against Him; but all marvelled at His wonderful power to reveal the secrets of men. When He came out of the temple the merchants went in again.

"Nicodemus, when he heard of it, rejoiced and said that in his opinion Jesus was a teacher sent from God.[1] And that this cleansing of the temple was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Malachi where it is written, 'The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple. And I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers; and against those that oppress the widow and the fatherless,[2] and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, saith the Lord of hosts.' Nicodemus therefore came to Jesus by night and sought to make His ac-

[1] John iii. 2. [2] Mal. iii. 3-5.

quaintance. And many of the people are beginning to regard Him as a teacher sent from God to save the nation.[1] But others shake their heads and mock, affirming that no prophet can come out of Nazareth. Yet they confess that they understand not how to account for the signs which He doeth."

"Where is He now?" asked Mary.

"He is tarrying in Judea with His disciples.[2] A few weeks ago, my father induced Herod our king, to go down to the Jordan to hear the words of the prophet, John the Baptist. I think my mother's counsel was behind that scheme. When Herod heard John speak, he was glad[3] and wished to be baptized of him. But John refused to administer the ordinance to him on the ground that the king hath no moral right to live with Herodias, his brother's wife, and that unless he doth abandon her, the king himself cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"My father is Herod's steward, and we know full well that the king's life is not regulated by the law of Moses. And we know also, and John knew, that to incur the displeasure of Herodias is even more disastrous than to incur the displeasure of the king himself. Therefore John withdrew from the Jordan and retired to Ænon, near to Salem in Judea, because there is much water in that place.[4] He supposed he was out of Herod's dominions and under the protection of Pilate.[5]

[1] John ii. 23. [2] John iii. 22. [3] Mark vi. 20.
[4] John iii. 23. [5] Smith's Dict. Bible, Art. Ænon.

"Now when Jesus began to teach in Judea also, the disciples surmised that Jesus and John would co-labor together and establish a new religion in the very strongholds of Judaism. Three days ago, however, Herod, urged on by the resentful Herodias, obtained from Pilate the privilege of extraditing John. And while he was baptizing the multitudes, the soldiers fell upon him and cast him into the prison-house of Machærus[1] beyond Jordan, the very spot from which the Arab wife of Herod, repudiated by him for the sake of Herodias, fled to her father, Aretas, king of Arabia, who, on that account, is now making war with Herod.[2] The arrest of the prophet John has filled all Jericho with wild excitement, and the people are in a mood for open rebellion if the spark of their anger were fanned but a little."

"If rebellion should break out in Jericho, what would become of thy Judith?" queried Joanna, in a mother's teasing voice. For she realized that her son was much excited and thus adroitly introduced a more soothing subject.

"I would bring her unto my home immediately," he promptly replied with a smile.

Joanna and Mary laughed outright.

"Mother," said Bar-Chuza, after a pause, "I must retire and lay me down. All night I have had a fearful headache. I feel feverish and nervous."

"Wilt thou not first refresh thyself with food

[1] Joseph, Ant. xviii., 5, 2. [2] Joseph, Ant. xviii., 5, 1.

or drink? The journey hath been too great for thee and thou art weary."

"No, mother, if I can but get to sleep. I dreamed last night of an open tomb and angels hovering around it. I thought it was in a garden of flowers hewn out of a solid rock. I saw the grave-cloths but I saw no one in the tomb. I feel as if something terrible is about to happen."

He spoke as one delirious. And the mother, realizing that he was indeed sick, became greatly alarmed and dispatched a servant for a physician. Meanwhile she applied wet cloths to his temples and rubbed his hands and feet.

When the father came home from Tiberias that night, Bar-Chuza appeared much better. And the physician assured him there was no occasion for alarm. So they communed together of the tidings brought from Jerusalem and Jericho.

"I heard to-day in Tiberias," said Chuza to Mary and Joanna, "that when John was imprisoned, Jesus immediately left Judea for Galilee, going through Samaria.[1] And that when He came to Jacob's well, a woman from the city of Sychar came out to draw water. He began to read her mind as though it were an open book before Him, and to tell her all her past life.[2] She had been a great sinner but, as there was no audience listening to the revelations He made, she did not run, as did the merchants in the temple, but frankly acknowledged Him a prophet. And she confessed to Him what, in her opinion, the

[1] Matt. iv. 12. [2] John iv. 4-26.

Messiah foretold by the prophets, would do when He cometh. She affirmed that He would restore all things. Jesus thereupon told her that He Himself was that Messiah. Then she, believing Him, immediately left her waterpot and ran into the city and proclaimed the good tidings to all the people. And such a sensation hath never been seen in Samaria as is now prevalent in the city of Sychar.[1] He is healing all manner of diseases and teaching the people as one having authority. And they are worshipping at His feet."

"Blessed be the God of Israel!" exclaimed Mary, clapping her hands for joy. "My son is He of whom the prophets have spoken. And I will depart on the morrow for Nazareth to put my home in readiness to receive Him on His arrival there."

"I would that thou mightest remove thy home to Capernaum,"[2] replied Chuza. "To this city all the people of the world will come to learn of Him, if indeed He prove to be that Prophet. For Capernaum-by-the-sea is a city exalted unto heaven throughout all Galilee.[3] And it hath a synagogue more magnificent than any of which even Jerusalem can boast. This synagogue was built by that generous-hearted, liberal-minded centurion[4] whom Herod hath stationed in this city to guard the interests of Rome. And Jairus is its ruler.[5] Moreover this city hath never had a prophet."

[1] John iv. 27–42. [2] Matt. iv. 13. [3] Luke x. 15.
[4] Luke vii. 5. [5] Luke viii. 41.

The heavy, distressed moaning in Bar-Chuza's room brought the conversation abruptly to a close. Both the mother and father went speedily to his bedside. It was evident that his fever was rising again, and that he was unconsciously talking aloud in a sort of delirium. All night long they kept watch over him. And in the early morn, Mary departed for Nazareth in Zebedee's caravan, Joanna assuring her that, since midnight, Bar-Chuza had rested much more comfortably, and that his fever was gradually sudsiding and would probably disappear before noon.

IV

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

"HEROD'S fiftieth birthday draweth nigh, and he desireth to make a great feast unto all the noblemen of his kingdom, and to celebrate the occasion with a magnificent display of wealth and power," remarked Chuza to Joanna, as he came in from Tiberias where he had been detained several days among the king's counsellors of the palace. "And he hath appointed me, as his chief steward, to have the general oversight of all the affairs pertaining thereto. It becometh us to give all diligence to his request, and to make the event a memorable one. I must depend upon thee, my true help-meet, for a woman's counsel in arranging the many details of this elaborate feast. It will be difficult to please Herodias. Her heart is set on seeing her husband promoted from the position which he now holdeth as tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, to the more honorable dignity of veritable king, although for all practical purposes he is king now. She believeth that a magnificent celebration of his birthday before all the lords and high captains of his dominion,[1] if preëminently successful, would be a splendid stepping-stone to-

[1] Mark vi. 21.

ward the throne. It is very important therefore that not a single mistake be made."

"How long is it before his birthday cometh?" inquired Joanna.

"It is yet three months, but time passeth swiftly," replied Chuza, as he took a seat beside her on the divan.

"I wish that Bar-Chuza was well!" Joanna muttered, as she leaned her weary head upon her husband's strong shoulder.

"Is he yet ill? Our physician told me on the morning that Mary left that he was suffering only from over excitement from which a few days rest would recover him. Hath he yet a fever?"

"Bar-Chuza is very sick," replied Joanna, bursting into tears. "All night long he hath tossed to and fro in a wild delirium, and his flesh hath been hot like flaming fire. I fear he hath caught one of those fatal Judean fevers which our physician understandeth not."

Then she put her arms around her husband's neck and sobbed aloud.

"He hath talked so much about the dream he had of the open tomb," she continued. "Last night as I sat beside him, I fell asleep for only a moment. Perhaps it was because his dream was on my heart that, in that short moment, I also saw an open tomb with Elijah the prophet standing by it. His face was as the image of the wrath of God. Before him stood a prince with a crown of gold on his head. And the prince trembled before Elijah, and his knees smote one against

the other. Then appeared a woman like unto Jezebel, wife of Ahab, king of Israel, and she whispered into the prince's ear. The noise of her whispering was like the hissing of a serpent when he prepareth his fangs to sting. When she had whispered in his ear, she vanished out of sight. Then the prince drew a sword and slew Elijah, and cut off his head. And behold, there was an earthquake exceedingly great and terrible. And the prince was swallowed up in the dark abyss that opened at his feet. And after him, there was one like unto Herodias drawn by cords fastened about her heart. And she was weeping and gnashing her teeth until she was thrown into the pit where the prince had fallen. Then the earth closed up again. And there came out of the tomb one like unto the Son of God, holding Bar-Chuza by the hand. And he said unto me, 'Woman, I have snatched thy son from the grave. Believest thou in me?'"

"I perceive that thou art greatly alarmed, Joanna, and well thou mayest be, for it hath been now nine days since our son fell sick of this fever. And our physician hath done him no good. There came with me into our city this morning from Tiberias, a young physician from Emmaus in Judea, who is expert in Judean fevers. His name is Lucas, and he sojourneth in Tiberias with the aged Hyrcanus, at whose feet he came to learn of the ancient treatment used in the days of Herod's father in such diseases as some of his friends have taken. I will send Trypho to call Lucas and also

the learned Hyrcanus to see our son, that we may know of the true nature of his malady."

"Mother!" exclaimed a voice from the sick room.

"Here am I, my son," responded Joanna, hastening into his presence.

"Hath father come?"

"Yea, here am I, my son," replied Chuza. "And how art thou to-day?"

The tears trickled down his cheeks, a silent reply.

"Father!" at length he spoke, but his sobs choked his further utterance.

"Do not be discouraged, my son," spake the strong, calm voice of Chuza. "Thou wilt be better to-morrow. I have sent Trypho to call in hither two physicians, friends of mine from Tiberias, who are sojourning in the city to-day. Even now their footsteps are at the door. In their hands thou wilt speedily recover."

Bar-Chuza was still sobbing when the physicians entered, and was evidently in a sort of dazed, delirious state. As Lucas bent over him to observe his symptoms, Bar-Chuza, mistaking the physician for his father, exclaimed,

"Father, tell Judith to come and see me before I die."

Then he sobbed hysterically.

The physician soon retired from the room.

"We can do nothing for him," were the words which Lucas spake in his parents' ears, in a low, sympathetic voice. "He cannot live until the

morrow's sun is set. The fever hath already begun its work of death."

At these words, Joanna wailed aloud. And tears trickled down Chuza's face.

"It hath been reported to me," said Lucas, after they had withdrawn into another room, "that Jesus of Nazareth hath power to heal all manner of diseases, and that He hath wrought many wonderful cures. He is thought by some to be Elijah the prophet, returned to earth. If this be so, ye know that Elijah once raised even the dead to life, and that no disease could stand before his presence. My counsel is that ye send Trypho to seek His aid."

"Perchance he will not come, seeing that thou dost send thy servant and cometh not thyself unto Him," suggested Joanna to her husband.

"Let Trypho hasten to make ready my speediest camel, and I will go myself," replied Chuza.

Over the hills toward Nazareth the father hastened away, while the physicians remained to faithfully care for Bar-Chuza and the prostrate Joanna, until Jesus should come. Moment by moment the image of death was seen more clearly in the face of the dying boy, until the seventh hour was come. That very instant Bar-Chuza opened his eyes and looked round about the room. Then he sat up in bed.

"I feel better now. Where is mother?" he asked.

"I will call her," replied Lucas, "if thou wilt lie down again."

"I feel like getting up. I am well now. What was that drink thou didst give me?"

"I gave thee no drink. Thou art beside thyself. Lie down!"

"Some one gave me to drink of the water of life. I felt it course through all my veins and cool all my nerves. Where is father? I thought it was his hand that gave it me."

"Hyrcanus, come!" exclaimed Lucas, gazing intently into Bar-Chuza's eyes. "In all thy days hast thou ever seen such a sudden change as this? Behold, his fever hath left him, it hath left him! Come, see for thyself."

Joanna sprang forward in haste as she heard these words, and outrunning Hyrcanus, was the first to reach the bedside of her boy.

"My son, my son! thou hast been nigh unto death. Thank God, thou hast been spared to me!"

All the servants wept for joy, as the mother threw her arms about Bar-Chuza's neck and pressed him to her bosom, while her face shone as if angels were speaking to her on every side round about that bed which, though fever-stricken a moment ago, was now sanctified through some mysterious manifestation of the Divine Presence.

"Let thy servant hasten to tell my master that God hath been gracious to thy son," exclaimed Trypho, as he knelt reverently before Joanna. "Why should he now trouble the Nazarene to come hither?"

"The night is dark and Marcellus may go with thee," replied Joanna.

Marcellus was the servant next in rank to Trypho.

"Say to thy master that his servants, Hyrcanus and Lucas, will remain here until he returneth," remarked Hyrcanus, as the servants departed.

Despite the protest of his physicians, Bar-Chuza arose and dressed himself and came into the large reception-room. There he was pleased to be seated beside his mother on the divan, to inquire of her what had happened during the while he was delirious. She told him of the errand on which his father had gone, of how the physicians had given up all hope of his recovery and of the dream that she had. And while she talked with him, Lucas and Hyrcanus sent for Petronius, the family physician, and were holding a consultation with him in an adjoining room concerning the symptoms of the disease in its earlier stages, and propounding theories by which to explain the strange convalescence.

After Trypho left, no one was conscious of how swiftly the hours passed, until by the light of day breaking over the mountainous regions beyond the sea, Chuza, Trypho and Marcellus, were seen in the distance hurrying homeward from toward Cana of Galilee.

"I knew that it would be according to His word!" shouted Chuza, as he rushed into the room, his face all aglow with exuberant joy. "As He spake with me, I felt His healing power

course through my spirit and flash forth toward my son, and immediately my spirit bore witness with His spirit that my son was healed.

"I found Him in Cana where He turned the water into wine.[1] Great multitudes surrounded Him and He was busy teaching them the things of God. I pressed my way through that vast throng until I was able to take hold of His hand. Then I besought Him to come down and heal my son.[2] Turning Himself about and looking upon me, He said: 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe.'[3]

"I saw that He was not minded to come. Then I fell down upon my knees before Him and prayed: 'Sir, come down ere my child die.'[4]

"He looked down into my face and I saw in His marvellously beautiful eyes that He had a blessing for me. I put my right hand upon my heart and my left hand upon my mouth, that all might see that I felt myself unworthy of the blessing which I felt He was about to bestow. As I did so, the whole multitude was hushed to silence and every eye was fixed upon Him as He looked upon me and said: 'Go thy way, thy son liveth.'[5]

"And I believed Him. There was a spirit bearing witness with my spirit saying, It is done. I could not doubt it. A burden rolled off of my soul. I was happy.

"I noted that it was the seventh hour when

[1] John iv. 46. [2] John iv. 47. [3] John iv. 48.
[4] John iv. 49. [5] John iv. 50.

He spake those words to me, and I knew that I had not time to return to Capernaum on the same day. But I resolved to travel all night. As I was about to pass through the dark forests of Dalmanutha, where robbers infest the highway, I was rejoiced to meet Trypho and Marcellus coming to meet me[1] and declaring that at that very hour in which the Master spake to me, the seventh hour, the fever left my son. I know, therefore, that His word did it. His power is divine.

"Joanna, thy dream is true. The Son of God hath snatched thy son from the tomb. Believest thou then that this Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God?"

"I do believe," replied Joanna.

"And so do I," exclaimed Bar-Chuza.

"And so do we all," proclaimed the nobleman. And himself and his whole house believed.[2]

[1] John iv. 51. [2] John iv. 53.

V

HEROD'S BIRTHDAY FEAST

"CALL in thy friends, Joanna, to rejoice with us through this glad day, and let us make a feast for them at the return of the seventh hour," exclaimed Chuza. "And let us tell of Him who hath done this great thing for us, that our neighbors also may believe in Him. For He is the long-looked-for Messiah that should come."

"Thy servants will do according unto thy word," exclaimed Trypho and Marcellus jointly, while each face rivalled the other in manifestations of joy at the pleasing suggestion. "And we can, and we will have all things in readiness by the seventh hour."

The household of Chuza was a well-regulated one. And the perfect discipline of the servants never was used to better advantage than now. Every servant knew at once what his part and duty was in the elaborate task to be performed.

The feast was spread. The nobleman's palace was filled with a happy throng and lighted with a thousand candles. Musicians were there with all manner of stringed instruments, praising God in hymns and psalms and spiritual songs.

Presently a weeping virgin, leaning upon the

arm of her mother, stood in the doorway of the mansion.

"Is he yet alive?" queried the maiden's sweet, refined voice, in accents soft and low.

"Is he yet alive?" asked the mother, on whose arm she leaned.

"Is he yet alive?" echoed throughout the mansion, repeated from lip to lip in every apartment, by the startled guests who thought they saw an apparition in these two figures at the threshold, and were wondering whereunto this would grow.

"Behold, this is Judith, my betrothed!" shouted Bar-Chuza, "and Miriam her mother. Blessed be ye of the Lord! Wherefore have ye come so unexpectedly?"

And he hurried forth to meet them.

No word had come to them of what the Nazarene had done. A neighbor had hastened to Jericho with the message that Chuza sent: "My son saith, 'Tell Judith to come and see me before I die.' His physicians, Hyrcanus and Lucas, say, He cannot live until the morrow's sun is set."

The words of this message were words repeated over a thousand times by the wife of Zacchæus and her beautiful daughter, as they hastened on their long journey from Judea to Galilee.

"Water turned into wine! Tears of sorrow turned into tears of joy; funeral lamentations into psalms of praise; fasting into feasting; loss into gain; death into life! This is the work

which Jesus of Nazareth doeth in Israel and blessed be His name!" exclaimed Joanna, throwing her arms around Miriam's neck and welcoming her Judean guests with all her heart.

"Aye, we had a prophet near Jericho," said Miriam, when all the guests had become composed, "and in him we looked for the redemption of Israel. The high priest and all of our learned Sanhedrim went unto him to know if he were indeed the Messiah that should come. Jerusalem and all Judea came unto him to be baptized of him, and to seek entrance into the kingdom of God. But Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, whom ye honor as your king, hath cast him into prison, and Herodias seeketh to slay him. We trusted that the Rabbi of the wilderness would be to us what Jesus hath been to you. But Herod hath bound him in chains and cast him into the prison-house of Machærus, there to die as a beast dieth, or as an outcast among men. If indeed ye have a prophet in Galilee, let his name and his mighty works be kept secret from Herod, lest Herodias, the adulterous queen, be minded to slay him also."

"What thinkest thou of what Miriam saith?" queried Joanna of Chuza, her husband.

"Miriam speaketh as one of the wise women," he replied.

And as he said this, behold, suddenly my dream was changed. The reception-room of the nobleman's house in Capernaum appeared to become instantly the banquet hall of the king's

palace at Machærus. Joanna was still seated beside her husband but was screened from public view, and was in the chief steward's appartments, giving a woman's counsel at the banquet of the king.

The tetrarch of all Galilee and Perea was seated on a throne of ivory and wore a crown of gold, and was surrounded by all his lords, his high-captains and chief men of Galilee. The musicians no longer played in psalms and spiritual songs, but descended into other realms and borrowed chords from ancient measures associated with the kings of Persia[1] in the days of Belshazzar.[2]

"The king hath greatly desired," remarked Chuza to Joanna, "that this birthday feast[3] of his should be served after the ancient pattern set by the great king, Ahasuerus, who ruled over one hundred and seven and twenty provinces, even from India unto Ethiopia.[4] Herodias hath made a study of how that feast was prepared. And she believeth that her daughter, Salome, being a lineal descendant of the high priest, Simon,[5] may have occasion to be promoted into the king's favor, as Esther was in ancient time. How she purposeth to bring this about, I know not. But thou knowest how Aretas, king of Arabia, maketh war against Herod because Herod hath repudiated the daughter of Aretas,[6] as Ahasuerus repudiated Vashti,[7] and hath married Herodias.

[1] Dan. iii. 15. [2] Dan. v. 1-31. [3] Mark vi. 21. [4] Esther i. 3.
[5] Joseph, Ant. xviii., 5, 4. [6] Joseph, Ant. xviii., 5, 1. [7] Esther i. 11–21.

See thou to it that we make no mistake lest Herodias be angry."

"It seemeth to me," replied Joanna, "that the musicians have taken their key from the feast that Belshazzar made to a thousand of his lords.[1] Their music doth make me see visions of a handwriting on the wall.[2] And methinks I hear the voice of some forgotten prophet saying unto our king, 'Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.'[3] Speak unto them that they fall not into error and displease the king."

Chuza went forth among the guests to speak to the leader of the band. As he was returning to his proper place, a stranger approached him just as he was passing Bar-Chuza. The stranger was a young man about Bar-Chuza's age.

"Art thou Chuza, Herod's steward, the nobleman of Capernaum?" he asked.

"Thou sayest it," he replied.

"Did Jesus of Nazareth heal thy son when at the point of death?"

"The thing is true," replied Chuza. "And lo, this is the young man," pointing to Bar-Chuza, "he can speak for himself."

"I am the one who was dead and behold, I am alive," was the salutation with which the stranger greeted Bar-Chuza. "And for a long time I have greatly desired to see thee."

Bar-Chuza gazed at him in amazement. Chuza stood by in silence, a puzzled look upon his countenance.

[1] Dan. v. 1. [2] Dan. v. 5. [3] Dan. v, 27.

"Hast thou never heard of the widow's son at Nain, whom Jesus raised from the dead?[1] I that speak unto thee, am he," said the stranger. "I was being carried to the tomb when Jesus and His disciples met my funeral procession at the city gate. He came and touched the bier and said unto me, 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.' I was in the world of disembodied spirits, talking with friends long since in glory, and seeing such beautiful visions as human language cannot describe, when I heard that masterly voice waking me out of sleep. And lo, my dream was ended."

"He is the very Son of God," exclaimed a stalwart soldier, who stood near listening to what was said.

"And how dost thou know?" asked the young man.

"I have faith in Him," the soldier replied. "He Himself hath said that He hath found so great faith no, not in Israel, as He hath found in me.[2] Chuza knoweth well that no centurion in Galilee hath a braver band of royal soldiers than are they who are under me at Capernaum. I say to one man, Go and he goeth and to another, Come and he cometh.[3] Perfect obedience they render unto me.

"When Jesus healed Bar-Chuza, I considered the matter well. And when, soon afterward, He removed from Nazareth to Capernaum, I considered all His marvellous works in perfect silence.

[1] Luke vii. 11–17. [2] Matt. viii. 10. [3] Luke vii. 8.

But one day, my servant, whom I hold dear, fell sick. And he grew worse until he was at the point of death. The Jews hold me in high esteem, because I built for them their synagogue in Capernaum. And I myself worship therein.

"I therefore called for the elders of the Jews and sent them unto Jesus to ask His help.[1] And when I saw that Jesus, desiring to do me a kindness, was coming in person unto me, I felt unworthy of such a noble presence.[2] I went forth to meet Him, acknowledging unto Him my gratitude and requesting that, as He had healed Bar-Chuza with the word of His mouth, so also for my servant, He might speak only the word[3] to the forces of nature, of which He is Lord, and these forces would obey Him as readily as my servants obey me. He marvelled greatly at the force of the illustration. Then He spake the word and my servant was healed.[4] I know that such power as that is divine.

"Moreover, since then, by the power of a word spoken by His lips, the winds have obeyed His voice on the stormy sea of Galilee,[5] the devils have fled from His presence,[6] lepers have been cleansed, and multitudes of sick folk have been healed. He raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus,[7] the ruler of our synagogue, and He hath opened the eyes of the blind.[8] Verily I know that no man can do the things which He doeth unless God be with him."

[1] Luke vii. 3. [2] Luke vii. 6. [3] Matt. viii. 8. [4] Matt. viii. 13.
[5] Mark iv. 39. [6] Luke viii. 33. [7] Mark v. 21-43. [8] Matt. ix. 27-31.

"Of whom do ye speak?" queried the captain of the king's guard, who had come to speak with Chuza.

"Of Jesus of Nazareth," replied the centurion. "Hast thou heard of Him?"

"Yea, I have heard of Him. I have heard of a sermon He preached upon the mount, wherein He taught the people that they should return good for evil and love their enemies.[1] Good doctrine that for soldiers to learn! A mystery indeed it is to me, if such a brave centurion as thou art hath any part or lot in principles of this kind."

When such sneering words were spoken, Chuza quietly withdrew and seated himself with Joanna again behind the screens.

"Dost thou remember, Chuza, that when King Ahasuerus was merry with wine, he sent for Vashti, the queen, to appear before his lords stripped of all her garments, that they might see her beauty?"[2] queried Joanna. "But she would not come. Thinkest thou that Herod will likewise send for Herodias, and that she purposeth to come thus in unto him?"

"Herodias hath planned this feast according to the devices of her own heart," replied Chuza. "But she knoweth full well that she hath no charms of person, at her present age, that could compare with Vashti's beauty. She hath planned therefore to have Salome come in by and by, clothed, I suppose, in such royal apparel as per-

[1] Matt. v. 43–48. [2] Esther i. 11.

taineth to a princess when she appeareth before the king and his lords. Herodias may be an adulterous queen herself, but she hath not fallen so low as to allow her only daughter, a grandchild of Herod the Great,[1] a virgin princess as beautiful as any the world hath ever seen, to come before the king's lords, high-captains and chief men of Galilee, in the nude state of the common dancing girl of Rome."

"Why, then, doth she wait until the guests are merry with wine, and have satiated all other desires but the lowest natures of men? And why doth she insist on duplicating the feast of Shushan, made notorious by Ahasuerus' request of Vashti?"

"Hist! behold, she cometh even now from her mother's chamber into the entrance hall. See her royal fabric, soft, white raiment, sparkling bright eyes! Did ever a virgin princess appear so beautiful? Hark, see the musicians get the signal! Now, hear them play their liveliest strains! See her feet begin to prance! There she cometh through the door at the king's right hand! See? See!"

"Yea, I do see," replied Joanna. "As she draweth near, her royal robes are seen to be of Assyrian gauze, as transparent as glass! See the high-captains crane their necks! Hear their coarse laugh and wild applause as, in their turn, she passeth near them! No marvel her cheeks are red with maiden blushes! See how artfully

[1] Joseph, Ant. xviii. 5, 4.

she poseth, disclosing a perfect female figure in every form and feature! Her dainty bits of lace and fine embroidery only serve to make her seem a prince's bride, ready for the bridal chamber! And that is the sensuous, living-picture which her adulterous mother, twice married, hath deigned to have her own daughter represent before this wine-inflamed assembly at this late hour of night! A fitting climax for the closing scene of this birthday feast!"

"Hist, hist! the king beckoneth for silence," commanded Chuza.

"Ask of me what thou wilt, thou beautiful daughter of Herodias, and it shall be granted thee, even to the half of my kingdom. Even so I swear unto thee before all my high-captains!" [1] exclaimed Herod, in a wild, half-drunken glee.

"That is the oath which Ahasuerus promised unto Esther, the queen, when she sought to have Haman slain," [2] remarked Joanna.

"Herod hath no kingdom; he is but a tetrarch. He speaketh as one beside himself, or as an actor trained to mouth his words," replied Chuza.

"If I have found favor in thy sight," spake Salome unto the king, as she hastily returned from her mother's room, bearing a silver platter in her hands, "let the head of John the Baptist be forthwith brought unto me upon this charger." [3]

Herod trembled, and his knees smote one against the other, as did Belshazzar when he saw the handwriting on the wall.[4] Yet for his oath's

[1] Mark vi. 23. [2] Esther vii. 2. [3] Mark vi. 25. [4] Dan. v. 6.

sake, and for the sake of them that sat at meat, he would not reject her.[1]

"Go thou and straightway do as she hath said," he commanded a soldier of his guard, and sat down again upon his throne.

The beautiful virgin princess, dropping on one knee before her king, her cheeks still flushed with conscious blushes because of scores of lustful eyes fixed upon the transparent robes of her graceful form, patiently awaited the soldier's return. As she arose to receive the coveted treasure from the king's hand, Joanna swooned; and all the chief men of Galilee shuddered. And as she bore it away to her mother,[2] careful that no drop of blood might soil her soft, white raiment as she went, I saw the pale, dead face of John, as the face of the man I had seen in the cave. And I knew that the third vision was ended.

[1] Mark vi. 26. [2] Mark vi. 28.

Fourth Vision

I

HEROD'S ARMY ROUTED

UNCONSCIOUSLY I listened for the voice of my enchanter to arouse me from my slumbers, but I heard no sound save the voice of many waters murmuring a requiem of the past. As the sustaining note of Judah's triumphant song on the plains of Bethlehem held its own, while all of the accompanying tones were transposed into other strains, so the visage of Joanna's face continued ever before my eyes, along the shores of Galilee to Capernaum-by-the-sea. On that same couch in the steward's palace, where Mary once reclined her weary head and heard the news of John's arrest, there Joanna came to herself again, when the shock of the prophet's tragic death was over.

"Where is Chuza?" she asked, scarcely recognizing that the one who sat at her side was Mary, the mother of her Lord.

"The king hath commanded him to bear a message to the general of his army, who hath gone forth with all the soldiery to meet Aretas, king of Arabia-Petra," replied Mary. "For Aretas hath come forth with a mighty army to avenge his daughter of the great dishonor Herod

hath done to her in forsaking her, his lawful wife,[1] for the sake of the adulteress, Herodias. Aretas hath already cut off the king's highway between Egypt and Damascus,[2] and doth greatly embarrass all the king's avenues of commerce."

"And did Chuza go away while I was yet unconscious and at the point of death, and leave me to my fate?" she asked in a voice of one aggrieved with a great disappointment.

"The king's business requireth haste," replied Mary, "and Chuza was compelled to go. But at the peril of his life he tarried, however, until he had obtained my promise to care for thee in his absence."

"That is like him," replied Joanna. "Noble man he is! A man too good for the service of such a king as Antipas! By all the powers of my persuasion, I am resolved that he shall no longer be Herod's steward. My dream hath come to pass in part. That prince which I saw with a crown of gold upon his head is Herod Antipas. And Elijah, whom he slew with the sword, was John the Baptist. And it remaineth yet for the earth to open her mouth and devour this wicked potentate, and then will my dream be completely fulfilled."[3]

"Thou speakest as one beside thyself, Joanna. What dost thou mean?" asked Mary, who had not yet heard of Joanna's strange dream.

"Hast thou not heard how Herod hath slain

[1] Joseph, Ant. xviii. 5, 1.
[2] 2 Cor. xi. 32.
[3] Josephus' Wars, ii. 9, 6.

the prophet John, who was Elijah returned to earth?" queried Joanna.

"Yea, verily I have heard of John's death, but how sayest thou that he was Elijah come back to earth? Herodias is not greater than Jezebel, wife of Ahab king of Israel, who sought to slay Elijah.[1] But she could not do so, for God delivered him out of her hand. Thinkest thou that Elijah returned to earth again would be less powerful than in days gone by? If Elijah is still in the flesh, awaiting a call to some greater service in the cause of reform, he will appear in due time, with not less power but more power than in former years, that he may accomplish the greater task which the Lord his God hath reserved for him to do. But if Elijah is not in the flesh, but hath indeed ascended into the heavens and hath not the body which once he had, then he will return with an angel's power, and death can have no more dominion over him."

"Who, then, was John?" queried Joanna.

"That is the question which the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask of John himself," [2] replied Mary. "And they asked him, Art thou Elijah? And he said, I am not.[3] Now if he were a prophet inspired of God, thinkest thou that he told not the truth? According to his own statement, he was not Elijah, but the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord." [4]

"But do not the scribes and Pharisees say that

[1] 1 Kings xix. 1–3. [2] John i. 19. [3] John i. 21. [4] John i. 23.

he of whom the prophets spake as the voice of one crying in the wilderness is the Elijah of whose coming the prophets have foretold? Therefore if John was the one, he must also have been the other."

"Thou speakest truly, Joanna. The scribes and Pharisees do say that thus the Scriptures teach. But may it not be true that the scribes and Pharisees are blind leaders of the blind?[1] All men hold John as a prophet.[2] And he, the inspired prophet, said plainly that he was not Elijah. He himself made a distinction between the voice of one crying in the wilderness, of whose coming Isaiah prophesied[3] seven hundred years ago, and the Elijah of whose coming Malachi prophesied[4] three hundred and fifty years ago. They are not one and the same person. They were prophesied of by different prophets, belong to different eras, and are similar only in the task they have to perform. When I was with Elisabeth, John's mother, in Jutta, Zacharias said unto us that the angel which appeared unto him in the temple said unto him, not that the child should be in truth Elijah, but that he should only have the spirit and power of Elijah.[5] The words of the angel therefore agree with the words spoken by John himself. Shall we set aside their testimony?"

"Nay, verily," replied Joanna. "And yet, Mary, thou thyself knowest that the Lord Christ

[1] Matt. xxiii. 16–19. [2] Matt. xxi. 26. [3] Isa. xl. 3.
[4] Mal. iv. 5. [5] Luke i. 17.

of whom the prophets spake is come in the person of thy Son. And the Scripture saith, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.' Who then shall come after the king? What need have we of Elijah now or hereafter? The Lord is already come. Can He come again?"

"Thou reasonest well, Joanna. I know not how to answer thee. Yet I cannot understand how the word of Jehovah can so plainly promise the real Elijah and give us only an imitation. Moreover, it is hard for me to believe that the adulteress, Herodias, or her husband, the wicked Herod Antipas, could have put to death a veritable Elijah. King Ahaziah sent fifty choice soldiers to take Elijah,[1] but they could not do it, for fire fell down out of heaven and consumed them. But it required only one soldier to behead John the Baptist.[2] Dost thou believe that the Sovereign of the universe would send Elijah back to earth again to suffer such a humiliating fate?"

"I cannot tell, good Mary. Would that I knew more about my God and the secret of His working! But I do believe that Herod and Herodias will not escape the thunderbolts of God's wrath for the crime which they have done.[3] I believe that the blood of the righteous John crieth out from the ground unto heaven for vengeance, as the blood of Abel cried out from the earth when Cain slew him."[4]

[1] 2 Kings i. 10.
[2] Mark vi. 27.
[3] Joseph, Ant. xviii., 5, 2.
[4] Gen. iv. 10.

Mary turned and looked into the street, attracted by the noise of a tumult there. Soldiers were hurrying to the centurion's house at the call of the trumpet, and the people were crowding into the streets.

"For everything that a man doeth, he shall account to God,"[1] replied Mary, in her usual tranquil voice. For she feared to let Joanna know that excitement prevailed in the streets. "Thou mayest be sure that even Salome, the daughter of Herodias, shall not escape punishment. But the wrath of God is something terrible. Let us not invoke it upon Herod's head, lest in falling it also consume us![2] To punish Herod as he deserveth, meaneth that the nation also must suffer with him.[3] Let us therefore hope that God will be long-suffering with Herod, that we ourselves may not be put to confusion."

Joanna appeared not to hear the last words of this wise counsellor, for her attention was drawn to the noise of hurrying feet upon the doorsteps.

"Behold, Bar-Chuza hath come from the king's palace on a galloping steed, and hath alighted at the centurion's home!" exclaimed Trypho, rushing into the room excitedly. "And the messengers of the centurion's guard are hastening hither and thither in wild alarm. Shall I bear thy son any message from thee?"

"He bringeth tidings from the war," replied Joanna, her face flushing with increased anxiety. "Go thou and say unto him that his mother hath

[1] Eccles. xii. 14. [2] Heb. xii. 29. [3] Prov. xxix. 2.

come to herself again, and desireth greatly to speak with him."

Trypho departed, but lo, Bar-Chuza was already at the gate. Joanna arose to meet him at the door. When he saw her, he was speechless, but threw his arms about her neck and wept bitterly.

"What aileth thee, my son?" she queried, supposing her weak and emaciated condition was the cause of his grief.

"Herod's army hath been routed," he replied, "yea, completely routed and overthrown by the angry king, Aretas. And the enemy hasteneth on to besiege Tiberias, and to lay hold on Antipas, the object of his wrath."

"All the thunderbolts of God's wrath have fallen quickly upon him, even according to my dream!" exclaimed Joanna.

"Herod is greatly alarmed," continued Bar-Chuza, "and he hath dispatched me with all possible speed to call the soldiery of Capernaum to guard the king's palace in Tiberias.

"It was a hard-fought battle, mother. Men fought like demons. And all the king's high-captains, whom thou didst see seated on his right hand at the birthday feast, are slain. All the hills and valleys bordering on Arabia are stained with blood and covered with the marks of defeat. And mother! O, dear mother, father, too, was slain."

At these words, Joanna fell into Bar-Chuza's arms. He and Mary laid her again upon the

couch. And as the tears rolled down her agonizing face, I thought of what Mary had said about the wrath of God, and I turned away from the scene of sorrow, and looked toward Tiberias.

II

HEROD HEARS OF JESUS

And before my weeping eyes there came another vision. Herod, with eyes inflamed and face perplexed, sat upon the judgment-seat, in the king's high court of Tiberias. Herodias was at his side. And before them knelt the centurion of Capernaum, answering questions and receiving instructions.

"If thou art held in high esteem among all the chief Jews, canst thou not obtain ten thousand volunteers to go in haste against Aretas?" queried the trembling tetrarch. And while he asked the question, Herodias gazed intently upon the centurion's face, as if searching in vain for some ray of hope.

"Thou knowest, O king," replied the centurion, "how the Jews hate thee, because thou hast married Herodias and thereby trampled their divine law under foot. They are persuaded that all this is come upon thee from their God, because, at her request thou didst put to death their prophet, John.[1] Moreover, thy servant feareth that the temper of the Jews at this present time is such that thou art in danger of an insurrection

[1] Joseph, Ant. xviii., 5, 2.

among them. For they are zealous to avenge the death of John. Thy servant desireth to command no army save the men who are sworn to be loyal to thee, O king, lest peradventure, when we have joined battle with the enemy, the Jews desert unto him, and the king and Herodias perish at the hands of Aretas."

Herodias bit her lips, and bending forward toward the centurion, herself put a question to him:

"But," said she, "are there not many among the chief Jews who call themselves Herodians because they believe that to be governed by the illustrious family of Herods is far better than to fall into the hands of the Romans or the kings of Arabia and of Egypt and of Assyria?[1] And will not such as they be loyal unto thee and unto Antipas, thy master, that they offend not Tiberius Cæsar, our great emperor?"

"Herodias speaketh truth, O king," replied the centurion. For it was not seemly that he should argue with the queen in the king's presence. "There is nothing hid from the king. Thou knowest how the Jews seek to make one of their own number their king, even Jesus of Nazareth, a man mighty in words and deeds. On yonder shore across the sea, but yesterday in a desert-place, He fed out of His own great storehouse five thousand men, beside women and children. And they rose up with one accord to make Him their king, and would have done so had He not

[1] Smith's Dict. Bible, Art. Herodians.

withdrawn Himself from them into a mountain to pray.[1] He saith that His time is not yet come to be made king. But the whole world is seeking after Him.[2] The king's armies are powerless to restrain the people from following after Him.[3] For He healeth their diseases, casteth out devils, and fashioneth the people anew. Thy servant knoweth not what exhortation He maketh before the people concerning the death of their prophet John. But if His face is set against thee, then know thou that the people will do all things whatsoever He saith."

"Who is this Jesus?" shouted Herodias.

"He is John the Baptist risen from the dead,"[4] replied Herod, his frame shuddering as a condemned criminal when haunted by the frightful apparition of a murdered man's spirit.

"Not so," replied Herodias, "thou art beside thyself!"

"Thou hast led me into eternal ruin, thou descendant of an accursed Jew,[5] and dost thou now rebuke me while seated upon my throne?" replied Herod, looking fiercely into the flushed face of Herodias.

Before that stern, indignant face, Herodias shrank and quivered, and bit her lips in silence. Tears presently came trickling down her cheeks. She had keenly felt the sting of the rebuke. Herod appeared not to be moved by the sight of her tears. But after a few moments' pause, he

[1] John vi. 15. [2] John xii. 19. [3] Mark i. 37.
[4] Matt. xiv. 2. [5] Joseph, Ant. xviii., 5, 4.

turned to the centurion and asked in a subdued, reflective voice,

"Dost thou believe that the God of the Jews, who made heaven and earth and all that in them is, before whom the innumerable hosts of heaven do continually cast their crowns, is a God who concerneth Himself to execute personal vengeance upon mortal man?"[1]

"O king, I believe that in Him we live and move and have our being," the centurion replied. "And He knoweth all our faults, and writeth down in His book all our deeds.[2] Knowest thou not how King David, who once ruled over all this land where thou dost now reign, and whose kingdom was even greater than thy Father's, hath said in the Psalms:

"'God is the Judge: He putteth down one and lifteth up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine foameth; it is full of mixture, and He poureth out of the same: surely the dregs thereof, all the kings of the earth shall wring them out and drink them.'[3]

"Yet, O king, God fighteth not as man fighteth. He is long-suffering and is kind. He doth not often come with a sword to slay. He prefereth rather to withdraw Himself from them that despise His counsel,[4] and alloweth them to walk alone until they stumble and fall.[5] But He giveth wisdom to them that ask Him, and He upholdeth them that obey Him. Jesus of Nazareth knoweth

[1] Amos iii. 2. [2] Rev. xx. 12. [3] Ps. lxxv. 7, 8.
[4] Ps. li. 11 [5] 1 Sam. xxviii. 6.

the mind of the heavenly Father, and the Father honoreth Him. He is able to instruct thee concerning all these things."

"I would that I could see Jesus!"[1] exclaimed Herod.

"And I would that thou mightest do with Him as thou hast done with John the Baptist!" exclaimed Herodias, in a sobbing but resolute voice. "For nowadays, many teachers arise up to deceive the people, and not one of them but claimeth to be some great one. The king doeth well to be rid of them all by the strong hand of his power. Then will the people be at rest, and insurrections will cease."

"Who doth this Jesus claim to be?" asked Herod.

"He declareth Himself to be the Son of the living God," replied the centurion. "And in truth He seemeth to have such power as belongeth only unto God. He openeth the eyes of the blind, which no prophet before Him hath ever done. He healeth all manner of diseases, walketh upon the water, cleanseth lepers and raiseth the dead. The Jews in Jerusalem have sent their leading scribes and Pharisees to follow Him in His journeys, and report to them what manner of man He is.[2] But He considereth them not. He hath chosen twelve apostles, all of them men of Galilee, and to them He revealeth His will in many secret sayings; and they follow Him whithersoever He goeth. To them also He hath given

[1] Luke ix. 9. [2] Mark vii. 1.

power to heal the sick, cast out devils and do all the signs which He Himself doeth, except to open the eyes of the blind.[1] He giveth to no man power to do that. He reserveth that miracle for Himself alone.

"Some say that He is Elijah come back to earth as the prophet Malachi hath promised.[2] Others say that He is one of the old prophets risen from the dead. But no man knoweth. The twelve apostles themselves are yet in doubt as to what manner of man He is. But that He is a teacher come from God, most all men confess."

"Send thou thy servant to call Him unto me!" exclaimed Herod. "I will examine Him myself. But be thou watchful at the city gate. Encamp thou there thyself to-night with thy brave band, and the king will sleep in peace."

And the centurion arose and went unto his camp.

[1] Matt. x. 8. [2] Luke ix. 8.

III

JESUS LEAVES HEROD'S KINGDOM

IT was the same servant which Jesus had healed, whom the centurion sent forth to deliver the message of Herod to Jesus. And in my dream I followed him through Tyre and Sidon and Decapolis, in his faithful search for the Master. But he found Him not until he was come into the parts of Dalmanutha.

"My Master hath sent me to say unto thee that Herod Antipas desireth to see Jesus," remarked the servant to the Apostle Peter, whom he personally knew as a fellow-citizen of Capernaum.

"The face of my Lord is set toward Cæsarea Philippi," replied the apostle.

"And Cæsarea Philippi is outside the dominion of Herod Antipas,"[1] observed John, the son of Zebedee.

"If thou canst press thy way through the Pharisees and Sadducees who now crowd about Him, intent upon a sign from heaven,[2] thou mayest thyself deliver thy message," answered Peter.

The centurion's servant acted upon this suggestion, and succeeded in touching the hem of the Master's garment. The Master turned and

[1] Joseph, Ant. xviii., 6, 4. [2] Mark viii. 10, 11.

spake kindly unto him, but I could not hear what reply was made, because of the tumultuous noise of the angry Pharisees and Sadducees who were threatening with wild gestures, clenched fists and chattering teeth, to have vengeance upon the Nazarene because He had just then called them an adulterous and evil generation.

"Why do the scribes and Pharisees annoy us with their unwelcome, intruding presence everywhere we go?" queried Simon Peter of John.

"They are filled with envy lest the Master have a larger following than they," replied John.

"I would that they might return to their own company and consider their own affairs," remarked James, the brother of John.

As they were saying these things, Jesus withdrew from the company of the Pharisees and Sadducees and, entering again into a boat with His disciples, He went away across the sea. And as they left the shore, I heard Him say to His apostles,

"Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees and the leaven of Herod."[1]

And the apostles treasured all these things in their hearts, wondering what His meaning could be.

And in my dream, I saw them land on the other side and make their way into Bethsaida. There He opened the eyes of a blind man, as He hurried on toward Cæsarea Philippi. But He

[1] Mark viii. 15.

would not allow the blind man to enter into the village to show the people this marvellous miracle.[1] The apostles were much disappointed that He would not publicly manifest His power and His glory. And as they set their faces northward on that long journey toward Cæsarea Philippi, their steps soon became weary, and their countenances discouraged. At times they followed afar off and communed with one another concerning these things, when, as they supposed, the Master's ear could not hear their conversation.

"If He is God's anointed King of the Jews, why doth He not set up His kingdom?" queried Judas Iscariot.

"And why doth He flee from Herod Antipas and from the machinations of Caiaphas and the chief priests of Jerusalem, if He be indeed the Christ?" queried Thomas.

"If He be not indeed the Son of God, how then doth He do these mighty works which no other man hath ever done since the world began?" asked Simon Peter.

"I was the first to follow Him," remarked Andrew, "and for two full years I have been faithful in all things as ye yourselves know. Two years ago, I supposed He would immediately manifest Himself to Israel. I confess that I have been somewhat disappointed in Him. For after two years of service with Him, it seemeth now to me that His only desire is to go about doing

[1] Mark viii. 22–26.

good. He is a great physician. No one can deny that. But when the working of miracles becometh an everyday occurrence for two long years, even this becometh monotonous. I have been wondering whether we are to spend all our lives following Him over these rough roads of Judea and Samaria and Galilee and the regions beyond, laboring hard to heal the sick, feed the poor and proclaim the kingdom of heaven at hand.[1] Is that kingdom at hand? Why then doth He not set it up? My heart longeth for home and rest."

"Andrew speaketh well," remarked Judas Iscariot, "but he forgetteth how we can work miracles as well as the Nazarene. Why, then, should we follow Him? Let us rather return to our homes and work miracles there. Simon Peter saith that the miracles which Jesus doeth testify that He hath come down from heaven, because no man can do these things except God be with him. We do the same miracles that He doeth and therefore we are also sent of God. That argument proveth that we also are sons of God. I am weary of following Him. I long to return to my merchandise where, in the avenues of trade, my wits can earn a living for me and mine, and add thereto olive yards, houses and lands. I have been hoping that the Master would set up a kingdom and exalt us, His chosen apostles, to high positions therein, as a just reward for our assistance to Him in these early days of

[1] Matt. x. 7.

His ministry. If He hath not the power, or if He hath not the mind to do this, I will resign my place in His service."

"If He is indeed the Son of God," replied John, "then we are truly sent of God, since we are the servants of the Son, as the Son is the servant of the Father. We cannot do all the miracles that He doeth. Which of us can open the eyes of the blind?"

"We can do everything else but open the eyes of the blind," replied Judas.

"How about raising the dead, can any of us do that?" queried Thomas.

"None of us have ever tried to raise the dead," replied Judas. "But we can cast out all manner of devils, and heal all manner of diseases. No man can do these things unless God be with him, or else it followeth that, since these things can be done without God being with us, so the things which Jesus doeth may be done without God being with Him."

"Judas remembereth not," replied John, "that we could not do these things until Jesus gave us the power.[1] He who gave us the power can also take it away. We have not the power to give this power to others, as He hath given it to us. He is greater than we are. If these things were done by some secret cunning or personal magnetism, it would be our privilege to impart it to others, and it would be difficult for Him to take the art away from us, when once we have en-

[1] Luke ix. 1.

tered into the secret of how to do these signs. But we all know that it is by the use of His name and by the exercise of power which He has delegated to us, that we are enabled to do the signs which He Himself doeth.

"Moreover, if our Master be not the Christ, then who is He? He cannot be John the Baptist risen from the dead, as Herod feareth, for He was with us before John was apprehended, and while John was yet alive. He cannot be Elijah, for John the Baptist was that prophet. He cannot be one of the old prophets risen from the dead, else the Scriptures would have foretold us that such a thing would be. Moreover, His mother is yet alive, and she is my mother's sister.[1] My mother knoweth that Jesus is her sister's son, and not one risen from the dead."

"True," replied James, "but John the Baptist was the son of Elisabeth, and how, then, can the son of Elisabeth be Elijah come back to earth? In the morning of the resurrection, can Elijah claim two mothers, of whom Elisabeth is one? Moreover, John the Baptist did no miracle,[2] but Elijah wrought many miracles. If, therefore, John the Baptist was Elijah, then Elijah must have lost much of his former glory and power by his long sojourn in the spirit world. Jesus doeth all the miracles that Elijah did. Yea, He doeth more. For though Elijah raised the dead,[3] yet he did not open the eyes of the blind,

[1] Smith's Dict. Bible, Art. Salome.
[2] John x. 41. [3] 1 Kings xvii. 21.

which Jesus doeth. The work of Jesus, therefore, doth more nearly correspond to that which we would expect in the literal return of an exalted Elijah."

On the roadside, at the foot of Mount Hermon, stood a large cedar-tree, with branches extended in beautiful symmetry over a resting-place for travellers. There Jesus sat down and the apostles came unto Him.

"Who do men say that I am?"[1] He asked, as the weary twelve sat down at His feet.

"There are many opinions afloat," they replied. "Some say, John the Baptist; some, Elijah; others, Jeremiah, or that one of the old prophets is risen again."[2]

"But who say ye that I am?"[3] He asked.

They looked one upon the other in silence and astonishment. Their faces were troubled. Had He read their thoughts? Had He overheard their conversation? They bowed their heads, and blushed with shame. Suddenly, as if aroused by some strange vision, Peter sprang to his feet and exclaimed,

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!"[4]

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah," replied Jesus. "For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church."[5]

[1] Mark viii. 27. [2] Matt. xvi. 14. [3] Luke ix. 20.
[4] Matt. xvi. 16. [5] Matt. xvi. 18.

Judas turned to Andrew and whispered in his ear, "My church! my church! what doth He mean?"

Andrew answered him not, for his whole attention was riveted upon Jesus, whose eyes were now fixed, not alone upon Peter, but upon all the apostles.

"Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels."[1]

Judas turned him about and whispered in the ear of John, "He reproveth us."

"Say not so," replied John, as the apostles arose to their feet to continue their journey with Him. "He speaketh of the reward He shall presently give us, when He setteth up His kingdom in the glory of His Father."

"But," replied Judas, "He saith that if we desert Him, we shall have no part in the glory of that distant day."

"That is as it should be," replied John.

"But dost thou not see how He doth urge us to remain in His service until we die with our hardship," replied Judas. "How shall that kingdom ever be set up, as long as we flee to the mountains like cowards from before the face of Herod and Herodias, just as Elijah fled from before the face of Ahab and Jezebel into the mountains of Horeb?"[2]

[1] Mark viii. 38. [2] 1 Kings xix. 3.

John made no reply, for the Master had fixed His eyes upon him and was saying,

"There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power."[1]

These words fell upon the apostles' ears like oil upon the troubled waters, or like the balm of Gilead on the sores of flesh inflamed.

Peter, James and John drew near to Him at the beckoning of His hand, and at His request, went with Him into the mountain-top to pray. When they had reached the summit, He was transfigured before them. His face did shine as the sun and His garments became white as the light. And there appeared two men in glory talking with Him.[2] And when I saw them, behold, one of them was like the man I saw in the cave of Machpelah. And at the sight of him, I cried out,

"Elijah the prophet, the real Elijah! the man whom I saw in the cave of Machpelah, whom I saw in the wilderness of Judea, the prophet who put me to sleep!"

But as I fixed my eyes upon him, behold, he was more glorious than either of the men I had seen in the caves of Judea. Then was the mystery deepened and he vanished out of my sight.

[1] Mark ix. 1. [2] Matt. xvii. 1-3.

Fifth Vision

I

ON THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION

THUS in my quandary I fell into dreaming again. And into my vision there came a cloud exceeding bright and beautiful. It rested upon Mount Hermon. And out of the midst of it there came a voice saying to the three apostles,

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."[1]

And straightway they fell upon their faces and were sore afraid. Then was the cloud lifted up into heaven again, and Jesus put forth His hand and, touching them, said,

"Arise and be not afraid."[2]

Then they arose and followed Him into the valley again. But as they were descending the mount, Jesus went before them, and they communed with one another, apart from Him.

"Now we know that He is not Elijah, for we have seen Elijah talking with Him," remarked James to his brother John.

"Yea," replied Peter, "we know now for a surety that He is in truth the Son of God, the

[1] Matt. xvii. 5. [2] Matt. xvii. 7.

Christ that should come into the world. For we have heard the voice of the Father bearing witness unto us that this is He of whom the prophets have spoken."

"Indeed He is the Son of God," replied John. "He is the Messiah for whose coming the scribes and Pharisees have been looking for centuries. He is the Saviour of the world, that Shiloh of whose coming our fathers dreamed. He is not Elijah. But why say the scribes and Pharisees that Elijah must first come? Hath he already come? Was John the Baptist that Elijah? What thinkest thou, James, concerning this matter now? Art thou now convinced?"

"Nay, my brother," replied James. "Thou thyself dost not appear to understand clearly what the prophets have written. For the Scripture saith, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.'[1] I confess unto thee that the Lord hath indeed come, but I do not understand that the great and terrible day of the Lord hath yet come. The great and terrible day referreth to the day of the resurrection when, as Solomon saith, 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.'[2] I know not when that day shall be, nor what it shall be like, but I am persuaded that the great and terrible day of which the prophet spake hath not yet come, and that before it cometh, Elijah will in due time appear."

[1] Mal. iv. 5. [2] Eccles. xii. 14.

"Elijah hath indeed come," remarked Peter, "for we have seen him here on this mount.[1] May it not be that this is the coming of which the prophet spake?"

"Hardly could this be so," replied James. "For did not the prophet say in the same Scripture that Elijah shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers?[2] How, then, was this part of the prophecy fulfilled, either by John the Baptist, or by Elijah's return to us on the mountain-top? When Elijah cometh, the whole prophecy, and not simply a part of it, will be fulfilled."

"Behold, the Master tarrieth for us yonder by the wayside," exclaimed Peter, "and now let us ask Him. For neither we ourselves, nor the scribes, nor the chief priests in Jerusalem, nor yet Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel, nor Gamaliel, the learned doctor of the law,[3] know the depths of the minds of the prophets as doth He whose face but an hour ago did shine as the sun.[4] He knoweth all things. His word is better authority even than that of the prophets. For hath not the Father Himself told us in this mount that Jesus is His Son, and that we must hear Him in all things:[5] for He hath been appointed to speak with authority equal to that of the Father in heaven? We will now ask Him to decide this question for us and for all Israel."

As the three apostles drew near to where Jesus

[1] Luke ix. 33. [2] Mal. iv. 6. [3] Acts v. 37.
[4] Matt. xvii. 2. [5] Luke ix. 35.

was waiting for them, He turned to them and said,

"Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead."[1]

"Why, then, say the scribes that Elijah must first come?"[2] they asked.

"Elijah indeed cometh and shall restore all things,"[3] replied Jesus. "But I say unto you that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they listed.[4] Even so shall the Son of man also suffer of them."

Smiling victorously, John turned and looked upon James.

"Elijah is come already," remarked John, when again the three apostles were alone a little way from Jesus.

"We all understand," replied James, "that when the Master saith, 'Elijah is come already,' He speaketh of John the Baptist who is now dead.[5] But when He saith, 'Elijah indeed shall come and shall restore all things,'[6] He speaketh not of one now dead but of one yet to be revealed. Moreover He saith, not that Elijah hath restored all things, but that he shall restore all things. John the Baptist did not restore all things, for all things are not yet restored, and he is dead. Is the kingdom yet restored to Israel? Did John the Baptist turn the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees to Jesus, or the hearts of the fath-

[1] Matt. xvii. 9. [2] Matt. xvii. 10. [3] Matt. xvii. 11.
[4] Matt. xvii. 12. [5] Matt. xvii. 13. [6] Matt. xvii. 11.

ers to the children? In spirit, Elijah indeed hath come as the Master hath said. But in person, he hath not yet come."

"But didst thou not observe," queried Peter, "how He also saith that the Son of man shall come,[1] yet we know that He hath already come and is now here. Dost thou think that the Son of man is yet to come because He speaketh of Himself as yet to appear?"[2]

"The Master uttereth things hard to be understood," replied James. "Only six days ago, He spake to us of how the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels: and then shall He render unto every man according to his deeds.[3] Now as thou hast well said, the Son of man hath already come, but not in the glory of His Father with His angels.[4] Neither hath He yet rendered unto every man according to his deeds. Perchance He speaketh of another coming both of Elijah and of Himself, in the which as John the Baptist preceded His first appearance, so Elijah shall precede His second appearance. May it not be possible that His second coming is to be glorious[5] even as we saw Him in the mount, when His garments were white as the light, and His face did shine as the sun? And may it not be that this glorious second coming shall be preceded by the glorious manifestation of Elijah in person, even as John the Baptist was Elijah in spirit?"

[1] Matt. xvi. 27. [2] Mark viii. 38. [3] Matt. xvi. 27.
[4] Luke ix. 26. [5] Matt. xxv. 31.

"Thou speakest as one beside thyself," exclaimed Peter. "Thou art a dreamer in Israel."

"See what a multitude is gathered about our brethren yonder in the plain!" exclaimed John.

"Hark!" exclaimed Peter, "I hear the well-known, derisive laughter of the scribes and Pharisees. There is excitement there. Let us hasten."

"Aye, the mulitudes now have seen us," remarked James. "See how they run to meet the Master!"

As the multitudes drew near, Jesus looked upon the scribes and Pharisees, His face flushed with indignation, because they had taken advantage of His absence to put the weakest of His apostles to confusion.

"What question ye with them?"[1] He asked.

But when they saw His face, they answered Him never a word, but sneaked away from His presence as serpents seeking refuge among the shrubs. Presently, an aged father came forth from the multitude and knelt down at Jesus' feet. And looking up into the Master's face, he said, while tears trickled down his cheeks,

"Lord, have mercy on my son! He hath a dumb spirit and it dasheth him down, and he foameth and grindeth his teeth and pineth away; and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast it out, and they were not able.[2] He is mine only child.[3] If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us."[4]

[1] Mark ix. 16. [2] Matt. xvii. 15, 16. [3] Luke ix. 38. [4] Mark ix. 22.

With majestic bearing, but sorrowful countenance, Jesus looked about upon the nine apostles and the multitudes. Then He lifted up His voice and exclaimed,

"O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you? bring him unto Me." [1]

And as they brought him to Jesus, the multitude thronged about Him to see what He would do. The scribes and Pharisees pressed forward to the front, hoping to see a failure in the Master's efforts such as they had witnessed in the nine apostles. And as they were bringing the boy unto Him, the spirit tare him grievously; and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming. [2] Jesus saw it. And when He saw that a multitude was running together, He calmly rebuked the spirit with a masterly voice, saying,

"Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him." [3]

And the boy was cured from that hour. [4]

"Did I not hear thee say," queried James of Judas Iscariot, "that the disciples can do all things that the Master doeth?"

"Yea, and behold, the nine of us together could not cast that demon out," replied Judas.

"And the scribes laughed us to scorn until I was ashamed of the whole company," remarked Andrew.

The disciples went with Jesus into the house

[1] Mark ix. 19. [2] Mark ix. 20. [3] Mark ix. 25. [4] Matt. xvii. 18.

which was standing close by.[1] And when they were inside, one of the nine asked Him,

"Why could not we cast it out?"[2]

And as they shut to the door, I heard the voice of the Master reply,

"Because of your little faith."[3]

[1] Mark ix. 28. [2] Matt. xvii. 19. [3] Matt. xvii. 20.

II

DISCUSSIONS IN THE TEMPLE

It was a mountain home.[1] The house was small, and belonged to a tiller of the soil. But it was opened to receive Jesus and His twelve apostles, while the scribes and Pharisees loitered about the door outside. And a great multitude filled all the yard, even down unto the gate that opened into the highway.

And as I gazed upon that scene, it was transfigured before me in my dream even as Jesus was transfigured in the mount. The little rural home among the hills of Mount Hermon became at once the magnificent temple of God in Jerusalem. The scribes and Pharisees loitering about the door were now become the chief priests and elders of the sanctuary. The multitude that thronged the yard from the door of the house, even unto the highway, was now become a mighty concourse of all nations and tongues, filling the whole temple area from the court of the Gentiles to the Corinthian gate.

And the fashion of that scene was magnificent, as when Jerusalem puts on her holiday garments to receive all Israel unto herself, to behold her glory and to keep the feast of the passover.

[1] Matt. ix. 28.

In the northwest corner of the temple inclosure, near the entrance of the king's gate, I saw a soldier approaching Malchus,[1] the captain of the guard. And as he drew near, he exclaimed,

"Never man spake like this man!"[2]

"What doeth He now?" the captain asked.

"He teacheth the people, healeth all their diseases, and putteth all His adversaries to shame," replied the soldier.

"Doth He not know that the scribes and Pharisees seek to kill Him?" asked Malchus. "Hath He no fear of the chief priests? It hath been said in my hearing that He speedily fled from before the face of Herod Antipas and that when danger is nigh, He always fleeth as a bird to the mountains."

"Likewise thus hath it been told unto me," replied the soldier. "But come thou and go with me, and thou shalt see for thyself how He feareth no man. He telleth the scribes and Pharisees that they are hypocrites,[3] whited sepulchres,[4] blind guides,[5] sons of murderers,[6] serpents, offsprings of vipers, doomed not to escape the judgment of hell.[7] Caiaphas biteth his lips and burneth with anger, as the people applaud the words of the Nazarene. But what can Caiaphas do? The Nazarene speaketh truth and the people know it."

"Caiaphas can do nothing," replied Malchus, "unless the Nazarene doth use violence and

[1] John xviii. 10. [2] John vii. 46. [3] Matt. xxiii. 13. [4] Matt. xxiii. 27.
[5] Matt. xxiii. 16. [6] Matt. xxiii. 31. [7] Matt. xxiii. 33.

break the peace. This He doth not do. Yesterday He came into the temple and drove out the merchants.[1] But He used no violence.[2] He simply commanded the tradesmen to get out, and they obeyed His order, precisely as if He were their master. Afterward they were angry because they obeyed Him. Neither could they explain why it was that they did obey Him. Moreover, He spake to the tables of the money changers, and instantly the tables went down, scattering shekels in all directions.[3] Likewise the seats of them that sold doves fell down before Him. Whatsoever He commanded was done, whether He spake to men or beasts or tables. It was the power of His word, the majesty of His presence, and not the use of physical force, which created the excitement yesterday.[4] And there is no law in all this Roman Empire against a man ordering the table of a money changer to fall down if the table chooseth to obey. With the Nazarene, it is not necessary even to utter the command aloud. How, then, are my officers to know whose command it was that the tables obeyed?"

"Thou sayest it, Malchus," replied the soldier. "He breaketh no law of the land, and His offence is not one with which the magistrates have power to deal. We dare not lay hands on Him, lest the people laugh us to scorn, or the multitude become enraged and stone us."

"It was but a little while ago," replied Mal-

[1] Matt. xxi. 12–17. [2] Isa. liii. 9. [3] Mark xi. 15. [4] Luke xix. 45, 46.

chus, "that Caiaphas came to me with angry accusations because I gave no commandment for the arrest of this Jesus. He reminded me of how this is the second time this man hath greatly disturbed the legally-licensed business of the Passover feast. And he threatened to prefer charges against me to Pontius Pilate, if this thing ever occurreth again. But I can find no fault in this man.

"The Herodians endeavored to entrap Him in His words and then prefer charges of treason against Him.[1] I was requested to stand near by, ready to arrest Him when He should speak the treasonable word against Cæsar. They approached Him with smiling faces and many pleasant words, pretending to be His best friends. Then they humbly asked Him if it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar. He turned His searching eyes upon them, as if He were looking into the very depths of their hearts and beholding their hypocrisy, and then asked them to show Him a penny. When they had given it to Him, He held it up before their eyes and the eyes of all the people, and inquired of them whose image and superscription it contained. And when they told Him it was Cæsar's superscription and image, He shrewdly replied, 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.'[2] Then they cast furtive glances one at another, and were amazed at the wisdom of His answer, while the multi-

[1] Matt. xxii. 16-18. [2] Mark xii. 17.

tude put them to confusion by laughing at their defeat."

"Here cometh one of Herod's men now," remarked the soldier, as he looked toward the king's gate. "He is the son of Chuza of Capernaum, who was Herod's steward. Thou knowest him. Let us ask him what the Herodians now think of Jesus."

"Peace be unto thee, Bar-Chuza!" exclaimed Malchus, saluting the young man as he was passing through the temple colonnade.

"Peace be unto thee, my lord," Bar-Chuza replied.

"Canst thou tell us of Jesus of Nazareth, who He is?" inquired the captain.

"He is the Son of God, the Christ that should come into the world," replied Bar-Chuza. "Have ye not heard of the miracle He wrought in Bethany, a village not fifteen furlongs from this city?"

"What miracle?" queried the soldier.

"The raising of Lazarus from the dead, after he had been in the grave four days,"[1] replied Bar-Chuza. "It was a miracle wrought in the presence of many of the chief Jews, some of whom have on that account since become His disciples."[2]

"When He was here in the temple, six months ago, He wrought a miracle almost as great as that," replied the soldier.

[1] John xi. 1–44. [2] John xi. 45.

"To what miracle dost thou refer?" inquired Bar-Chuza.

"To the opening of the eyes[1] of the son of Hananiah, who was seated yonder by the temple gate on the Sabbath day. It was not lawful for him to beg on that day, but he was hungry and needy, so he sat there hoping that some one would give him something without his asking for it. Jesus passed by, and one of His disciples asked Him whether this poor man or his parents sinned, that he was born blind. Jesus replied that not every misfortune or affliction hath its source in sin. And that in this man's case, neither he nor his parents had sinned after the fashion to bring about this affliction. But that he was born blind, in order that the works of God might be made manifest in him. Thereupon Jesus anointed his eyes and sent him to wash in the pool of Siloam and, behold, he received his sight. All Jerusalem hath heard of it. No such miracle as that of opening the eyes of one born blind hath ever been heard of since the world began.[2] Therefore many believe that He is the Messiah that should come."

"Canst thou, Bar-Chuza, tell us why it is that Herod Antipas seeketh to kill Him?"[3] inquired Malchus.

"Because of Herodias," replied Bar-Chuza. "It was at her request that he put to death John the Baptist. And Herod feareth that Jesus is John the Baptist risen from the dead."

[1] John ix. 1–41. [2] John ix. 32. [3] Luke xiii. 31.

"Doth Jesus know that Herod seeketh to kill Him?" queried the soldier.

"He knoweth all things," replied Bar-Chuza. "But there were some who came to tell Him particularly about this. And Jesus replied to them, 'Go and say to that fox, behold I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected. Howbeit, I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem.'" [1]

"Thinkest thou, then, that He foreseeth His death at the hands of these chief priests in Jerusalem?" asked Malchus.

"The Master uttereth many things hard to be understood," replied Bar-Chuza. "He saith that John the Baptist was Elijah and that John prepared the way for Him. Now we know that John was put to death. If then it is true that John, a veritable Elijah, could be put to death, why may not the Son of God also die and return to us again even as Elijah and Lazarus did?"

"But Elijah did not die," observed Malchus.

"If Elijah was John the Baptist, he hath died," replied Bar-Chuza. "But we know that the dead do not cease to exist. Believest thou not that the spirit of John the Baptist is now in the same place whither it went when Elijah was taken up into heaven, and from whence it came to be born again into the world? If John the Baptist was Elijah, then Elijah experienced a new

[1] Luke xiii. 32–34.

birth. And Jesus said unto Nicodemus that we must all be born again in order to enter into the kingdom of God. I am persuaded that there is something about John the Baptist and his relation to Elijah the prophet, which furnisheth the key to the proper understanding of this marvellous life of Jesus. When Israel finds that key, then will the meaning of the words of the Son of man be unlocked, and these hidden mysteries made clear to all the world. For Jesus affirmeth and re-affirmeth that John the Baptist came into the world in the spirit and power of Elijah, to prepare the way for the coming of the Christ. We must therefore revert to the standpoint of Elijah before we are prepared to appreciate and to recognize what the coming of the Christ meaneth."

"See! see!" exclaimed Malchus, pointing to a crowd of chief priests and elders, who were now concertedly gathering about Jesus, as He was teaching the people.

"Let us go forward and see what they mean to do!" exclaimed the soldier.

And as they drew near, a short, thick-set Pharisee, with small black eyes, brazen face, rich sacerdotal robes and broad phylactery, known throughout the city as a money lender of remorseless extortion, reached forth his hand, placed it upon the arm of Jesus and asked of Him in a loud, narrow, angular, imperious voice,

"By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority?"[1]

[1] Matt. xxi. 23.

Jesus turned and looked upon him a moment in silence. And when He saw that there was with him a great company of chief priests and scribes and Pharisees, and that there was danger of a tumult, He calmly replied,

"I also will ask of you one question which if ye tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things."[1]

"Be it according to Thy word!" rang out the shrill voice of Alexander, the kinsman of the high priest,[2] who thought he saw in this proposition an opportunity to compel the Nazarene to testify plainly before all the people whether or not He claimeth to be the Son of God, the Messiah that should come.

"Be it according to Thy word!" exclaimed a chorus of voices from the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees, who were pleased to follow Alexander's leadership.

"Tell us, therefore, what Thy question is," commanded the short, thick-set Pharisee, whose hand still held to Jesus' arm.

With one accord the vast multitude became silent and every ear was listening. Every eye was fixed upon Jesus. A knowingly victorious smile played upon the Master's face, as He turned to these chief Jews and asked,

"The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?"[3]

Jesus continued to teach the people and to heal

[1] Matt. xxi. 24. [2] Acts iv. 6. [3] Matt. xxi. 25.

their diseases, while the chief priests and elders conferred together in the open temple court.

"I remember," remarked a scribe, whose long, grey beard and unshorn hair reminded me of a Nazarite, "that when John sent two of his disciples to inquire of Jesus whether He is indeed the Christ, or whether we should look for another, He turned to the multitudes and asked of them, 'What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? But wherefore went ye out? To see a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is He of whom it is written,

"'Behold I send My messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.

"'And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah which is to come.'[1]

"Now when Jesus said this, I remember that some of His disciples were greatly astonished. They did not understand how Elijah 'is to come,' if he hath already been here in the person of John the Baptist. Jesus saw that they were astonished at this statement, and that they did not seem to understand its inner meaning. And when He saw it, He looked steadfastly into their faces and said very slowly and solemnly, as if in His statement there is a secret worth seeking to discover, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.'[2] Now my ears heard Him say that Elijah 'is to

[1] Matt. xi. 7–14. [2] Matt. xi. 15.

come.' If he 'is to come,' how can it be that he hath come already? If we say to Him that John the Baptist was Elijah, then He will say to us that we ought to have believed this Elijah when he testified of Him that He is the Son of God."

"But thou knowest," replied Alexander the kinsman of the high priest, interrupting the scribe, "that John said unto us, when we came officially to inquire of him at the Jordan who he was, that he was not Elijah. He told us plainly that he was not.[1] Now if he were indeed a prophet sent of God, how can it be that he told us that which was not true?"

"Alexander speaketh as one of the wise men," exclaimed the short, thick-set Pharisee, who had been spokesman for them to Jesus. "But all the people hold John as a prophet.[2] Now if we shall say that he was indeed a prophet sent of God, and that his baptism was therefore from heaven, then as Alexander saith, Jesus will say that we ought to have believed John, when John said He was the Son of God. But if we say that he was not a prophet, then all the people will stone us. Let us therefore say that we know not whence his baptism was."[3]

[1] John i. 21. [2] Matt. xxi. 26. [3] Luke xx. 7.

III

SENSATIONS IN JERUSALEM

"BEHOLD, Zacchæus also is among His disciples. He is a new creature. He hath been born again," remarked Bar-Chuza to the captain of the guard, as they stood in the open court hearing the elders and chief priests discuss the question of whence John's baptism was.

"What dost thou mean?" asked Malchus.

"I mean that a change hath been wrought in that man, by which he hath obtained a new disposition, new eyes, new mouth, new ears, new appetite and new aspirations," replied Bar-Chuza.

"Thou speakest as one beside thyself. Who hath ever heard of such a thing? What is this that thou sayest?" queried Malchus.

"If only thine eyes were opened to behold the new world which the Master hath brought down out of heaven into this earth,"[1] replied Bar-Chuza, "then thou couldst understand my words. But now they are as foolishness unto thee, because He hath not opened thine eyes to discern the things that are spiritual.[2] Hast thou never read of what Elisha did, when the king of Syria sent horses and chariots and a great host to encom-

[1] Matt. xi. 12. [2] 2 Cor. v. 17.

pass the city of Dothan by night to take the prophet captive? how the servant of the man of God arose early and went forth and beheld the host and the horses and the chariots? and how when he saw them, his knees smote one against the other, and he fell down at Elisha's feet saying, 'Alas, my master! how shall we do?' Dost thou not remember that Elisha said unto him, 'Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them'? Then Elisha prayed that the Lord might open the servant's eyes, and when they were opened, behold, the young man saw that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around about Elisha.[1]

"Malchus, thou art like unto this servant of Elisha. For there is another world come down into this, a kingdom of heaven set up among men, and thine eyes are not as yet opened to behold this kingdom.[2] But it is a kingdom just as real as the physical world which thou dost now so clearly see. Jesus hath set up this kingdom and it shall stand forever. All Jerusalem cannot take Him prisoner, any more than the host of Syrians could take Elisha. Surrounding Him, unseen by mortal eye, are more than twelve legions of angels ready to do His will and, if necessary, ready to slay quickly all His adversaries."[3]

"I would that He might also open my eyes that I might see these things!" exclaimed Malchus.

"And indeed He will, if thou but seek to do

[1] 2 Kings vi. 13–18. [2] Matt. iii. 2. [3] Matt. xxvi. 53.

His commandments," replied Bar-Chuza. "For He casteth no one away who cometh to Him in spirit and in truth.[1] Over beyond Jericho there was a blind man, Bartimæus by name, who sat by the wayside, begging. He heard the noise of the tramping multitude passing by and, as I put two mites into his outstretched hand, he asked me what it was. I told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, going up to Jerusalem. Immediately he cried out with a loud and piteous cry, 'Jesus, Thou son of David, have mercy on me!' And he kept on crying aloud, saying the same thing.[2] Simon Peter, one of the apostles, therefore came to him and commanded him to hold his peace, and cease to disturb the great congregation which was then intently listening to a parable, which Jesus was speaking concerning the end of the world and the kingdom of heaven.[3] But Bartimæus cried all the louder, and all the more piteously, saying, 'Jesus, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.'

"The people thought that such a great teacher as Jesus is, would not think it worth while to notice such a miserable, poor blind beggar as Bartimæus. But when He had finished the parable, He turned to His disciples and said, 'Bring him unto Me.' And when he was brought, Jesus said unto him, 'What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?'[4] And he said, 'Lord, that I may receive my sight.' Then Jesus said unto him, 'Receive

[1] John vi. 37.
[2] Mark x. 46-48.
[3] Luke xix. 11-28.
[4] Luke xviii. 40, 41.

thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.' And immediately his sight was restored, and he followed Jesus shouting with exceeding great joy. And all the people likewise, when they saw it, praised God.[1]

"Thinkest thou, Malchus, that I am beside myself because I say unto thee that thy soul hath eyes as well as thy body? Jesus openeth the eyes of the body that all men may know that He hath also power to open the eyes of the soul. No man openeth the eyes of the blind but Jesus Himself, that all men may know that there is salvation in Him, and in Him alone. For as He alone openeth the eyes of the blind, so He alone can give spiritual vision to the soul.

"Thy comrade hath told thee of the son of Hananiah, the man who was born blind, whose eyes Jesus opened six months ago. A few weeks since, I chanced to be in the home of Zacchæus of Jericho, when this son of Hananiah came in to inquire for a gold ring which once belonged to his mother, but which Zacchæus had taken for taxes. He introduced himself by saying that he was the son of Hananiah, and that he had come to redeem the ring which his mother held in such high esteem that she would willingly pay three times its value in order to obtain it again.

"'Thou art deceiving me, thou art not the son of Hananiah,' replied Zacchæus. 'For the son of Hananiah was blind from his birth, and hath

[1] Luke xviii. 43.

never known such beautiful eyes as thou hast.' For Zacchæus had not heard that his eyes had been opened. But the son of Hananiah thereupon told Zacchæus of all that had befallen him, and of how Jesus of Nazareth had given him those new and beautiful eyes. Moreover, he said that his parents had become too old and infirm to earn a living for themselves, but that Jesus, by restoring his sight, had now enabled him to become their support and comfort.

"Zacchæus wept when he heard that story. And it was the first time that his eyes had been washed with tears since he became the publican of Jericho. He gave back the ring, refused to accept the proffered silver, and sent a present to the aged parents worth four times the value of the ring. And he asked that they might forgive the wrong of former days, and remember no more against him the harrowing scene enacted under the sycamore tree on that day when he compelled them to give to him the one trophy that they held so dear.

"When the son of Hananiah heard this, he lifted up his voice and wept for joy, and blessed Zacchæus. And as he was going away, I saw him stand under that same sycamore tree and pray that God would be merciful to the repentant publican of Jericho.

"It happened soon afterward, that Jesus was passing through Jericho, on His way to Jerusalem. And He had just been saying that it was difficult for rich men to enter into the kingdom

of heaven.[1] In the nature of things this must be so, because very many rich men have obtained their fortunes, as Zacchæus obtained his, by extortion and oppression. People learn to hate such men and to annoy them whenever they can. Frequently it happeneth that for this cause such men grow into the habit of esteeming all men according to their financial worth and of looking upon the very poor in contempt. Jesus is poor. But the wife and daughter of Zacchæus learned to know Him and to love Him. And He teacheth all men to love their enemies, and to do good wherever and whenever they can. Following these instructions, Miriam and Judith became particularly kind and helpful to all their acquaintances, whether rich or poor, and to many poor people whom they did not personally know. At the first, Zacchæus protested against it. But in their arguments and dealings with him, they manifested the law of kindness which Jesus taught them, until he had no heart to deny them any wish they expressed. And some of the people began to love him for his family's sake. Then he saw another side of life, another view of humanity. In his soul, he began to long for the quiet peace and joy which his wife and daughter seemed to possess. And he was told that in Jesus he could find such peace and such rest, if he would but obey the directions of the great Teacher.

"When Jesus was passing through Jericho,

[1] Matt. xix. 23-26.

therefore, Zacchæus sought earnestly to see Him. But the people treated him roughly, not knowing that the law of kindness had come into his heart. Being short of stature, he could not see the Master over the heads of the multitude. And the crowd would not open to let him pass through. Therefore he ran ahead of the throng until he came to his own house, where he climbed up into a sycamore tree to get a view of the Lord as He passed that way. When the people saw him, they thought to annoy him with jeers, imprecations and hard accusations. But Jesus, knowing all that was in Zacchæus' heart, and desiring to teach the multitude the divine law of kindness and love, would not suffer the publican to be thus humiliated. Looking up into the tree, Jesus fixed His eyes steadfastly upon him and exclaimed, 'Zacchæus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.'[1]

"Thereupon he hastily came down and received Jesus gladly. But the multitude was much displeased, and murmured greatly. Jesus, however, careth little for public opinion. It was the goodness of Jesus and not the goodness of the people who followed Him, that brought Zacchæus to repentance and caused him to shed great tears of joy and gratitude. But it was needful that Zacchæus should stand before all the people and make a public profession of his change of heart. And he did so. Standing there before the Master and all the people, he

[1] Luke xix. 5.

solemnly avowed, 'I do now give half of all my goods to the poor. And to the people whom I have wronged, I do now promise to restore fourfold.'[1] Then did the disciples learn how a rich man entereth into the kingdom of heaven. For when Zacchæus had said this, Jesus blessed him and said to all the people, 'To-day is salvation come to this house.'[2]

"Since then, Zacchæus hath been as different from what he used to be as if he had been born again with a new disposition, and born into a higher realm of existence. Not every rich man will agree to make restitution to all whom he hath wronged. Neither will every man allow his shekels to be controlled by his religious profession. Men who will not do these things, will not allow Jesus to reign over them, and consequently give no ear to His commandments.

"But look ye now upon Zacchæus, who hath become His disciple, and mark ye how he appeareth to be a prince in Israel. His eyes see differently, his ears hear differently, and his mouth speaketh good tidings. Moreover, his countenance is glad, like the countenance of a man who seeth the smiling face of his God, or a vision of saints and angels in heaven."

Malchus heard all that Bar-Chuza said. Then looking squarely into Bar-Chuza's face, he replied, with intense feeling and deliberation:

"Zacchæus hath done well. I believe that

[1] Luke xix. 8. [2] Luke xix. 9.

mine eyes also are beginning to be opened. Yet I cannot hope to do as Zacchæus hath done. For I am a man under authority, and I am sworn to obey my superiors. If Caiaphas should persuade Pontius Pilate to lay hands on Jesus, as he threateneth to do, I would be compelled, by virtue of my office, to execute that order. And I could not refuse, even though I foreknew that an unseen angel would smite me down with sudden death."

"Why shouldst thou obey men rather than God, and thus invoke the terror of God's wrath?"[1] asked Bar-Chuza.

"See! see!" exclaimed Malchus, "the chief priests are returning to Jesus. Hist, now, and let us hear what answer they will give to His question."

The short, thick-set Pharisee with the small black eyes, rich sacerdotal robes and broad phylactery, was in the lead and evidently their spokesman. As he drew near, Jesus beheld him and paused in the discourse to which all the people were listening so attentively, and turned Himself silently to face this self-righteous individual. The eyes of all that vast multitude were immediately fastened upon this proud and self-important Pharisee, who seemed now very conscious of the high honor bestowed upon him, to be for this occasion the official representative of the Jewish nation. With a pompous air, he drew near and stood defiantly before the Nazarene, looking up

[1] Acts iv. 19.

into His face. His lips moved, his voice could scarcely be heard, his words were mumbled.

"Speak louder!" cried a voice far out in the audience. "Speak louder!" shouted a chorus of voices throughout the whole multitude.

The Pharisee's face turned red as scarlet. His little black eyes flashed forth indignation and embarrassment. He turned and looked scornfully upon the people. Rufus, Alexander and the other chief priests, dropped their proud heads and looked sheepishly upon the earth.

"Speak louder!" came forth a mandatory shout of ten thousand defrauded and enraged people.

"We cannot tell whence it was," shrieked the angry Pharisee, in tones that indicated his contempt for such an accursed audience.[1]

"Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things," [2] replied the calm, sweet voice of Jesus, smiling victoriously.

When the people heard that, the whole multitude applauded vociferously. Then were the elders and chief priests greatly annoyed, and immediately withdrew in anger and chagrin to one of the cloisters of the temple.

The Sadducees thereupon laughed the chief priests to scorn, and were greatly amused at their discomfiture. They followed them into their council, and spake unto them in derision, saying,

"Ye are not wise enough to entrap such an one as He is, and ye should not have attempted it.

[1] John vii. 49. [2] Mark xi. 33.

Wist ye not that He is from Nazareth, that great city in Galilee, renowned for the wisdom, learning and ingenuity of its citizens? The wise men of such a city as Jerusalem ought to have known better than to have challenged the son of a carpenter of Nazareth to a public debate in the temple court, where tens of thousands of people are assembled. But if it were necessary to entrap Him in His talk, ye should have kept quiet yourselves and have employed men of real ability, like the Sadducees, to do the work. And if ye will now look upon us, we will show you how it can be accomplished."

The Sadducees do not believe in a resurrection. They therefore went to Jesus and spake a parable about a woman who was married seven times, and each time according to the law of Moses.[1] Then they asked Him to please tell them whose wife she should be in the morning of the resurrection.

"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God," Jesus instantly replied. "For in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven."[2]

At this saying, the whole multitude was greatly astonished. The answer was so unexpected, and so revolutionary, that the Sadducees feared to inquire of Him further. They looked one upon the other in amazement, and were silent. Rufus and Alexander gazed upon their

[1] Mark xii. 18-23. [2] Matt. xxii. 29, 30.

confused faces, and could not refrain from laughter. Jesus continued teaching the people as if nothing of importance had happened. And the Sadducees quietly withdrew.

When the Sadducees and Pharisees had come together again, a lawyer came to their assembly and reminded them that to ask difficult questions belonged to the men of his profession. For the sake of the high regard which he had for the priests and religious teachers in Jerusalem, he would like for them to give him a trial, that if possible the disastrous defeat of the day might yet be turned into victory. He offered his services gratuitously, if they would only empower him to represent the Pharisees and rulers.

To his proposition they all agreed. And the Pharisees went with him as he approached Jesus. But they stood back a little way, intending to surround him in case of victory, and thus share the glory, but in case of defeat to appear as only spectators, with no part or lot in the controversy. The young lawyer secured the Master's attention and promptly asked,

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"[1]

"Yea, yea, in truth that is a hard one," muttered Alexander to an elder who stood beside him.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind.[2] This is the first and great command-

[1] Matt. xxii. 34–36.

[2] Matt. xxii. 37, 38.

ment," replied Jesus without a moment's hesitation. "And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

"That is a rather sharp thrust at the heart of a lawyer," remarked the Sadducee who had asked the question about marriage. "If a lawyer would love his neighbor as himself, what would become of his business?"

Jesus was not willing, however, that the people should misunderstand the logic of His answer. Therefore He explained to them the reason why these two commandments are the greatest, saying, "On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets."

Then addressing Himself to all His questioners, He asked,

"What think ye of the Christ? whose son is He?"[1]

"He is the son of David," they quickly replied.

"How, then, doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet? If David then calleth Him Lord, how is He his son?"[2]

And not one of them was able to answer Him a word, neither did they ask Him any more questions.[3] But they took counsel together how they might put Him to death.[4]

"The countenances of the elders and of the

[1] Matt. xxii. 42.
[2] Matt. xxii. 43-45.
[3] Matt. xxii. 46.
[4] John xi. 53.

chief priests are like the countenances of demons resolved to do their worst," remarked Malchus to Bar-Chuza.

"True," replied Bar-Chuza, "but the expression on Jesus' face is as the imprint of holiness, peace, and love. The contrast between them is as the contrast between the nether world and heaven."

And as we stood there together looking upon Jesus, behold, He stretched out His hands toward the blue skies, and lifted up His voice in prayer and said,

"Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name."[1]

And immediately there came a voice out of heaven saying,

"I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."[2]

And the noise of this voice was as the noise of thunder.[3] And I turned mine eyes from beholding Jesus, to the temple court to see whence the voice came. And lo, the vision vanished out of my sight.

[1] John xii. 27. [2] John xii. 28. [3] John xii. 29.

IV

THE GOODMAN-OF-THE-HOUSE

And as I looked toward the northeastern gate of the temple, I saw a man in the street, bearing a pitcher of water toward the gate of the city which openeth toward Mount Olivet. And as he was going, behold, Peter and John came in through the gate to meet him. And when they saw the pitcher, their countenances were exceeding glad, and they fixed their eyes upon it as though it were a secret sign of some memorial service to be perpetuated forever.[1] Straightway they came up to this man, and turning themselves about, followed him to another street into the house whither he went.

And as they entered the house, I saw a man like unto the priest I saw first in my dream, before I entered the cave of Machpelah. His appearance reminded me also of the man I saw in Abraham's tomb, except that he had not the long raven locks of hair, nor eyes that could flash lightning. It was this priest's home into which this servant entered with the pitcher of water. And before the priest, at the threshold of the door, Peter and John stood and said,

"The Master saith, Where is My guest-cham-

[1] Luke xxii. 8–10.

ber, where I shall eat the passover with My disciples?"[1]

And he himself took them into a large upper room, furnished and ready. And when they had seen it, they returned to the Master. And when it was evening, Jesus came with the twelve, and having entered into that room, the doors were shut.

Then I drew near to the man of this house, who was standing guard at the entrance door. And as he looked upon me, I felt the power of a holy presence and my spirit cried out within me,

"What dost thou here, Elijah?"

"I am not Elijah," he replied.

"Art thou, then, one of the chief priests of the temple?" I asked.

"I am not," he replied. "I am only one preparing the way of my Lord and making His paths straight."

"Art thou, then, John the Baptist, risen from the dead?" I queried.

"Nay, I am the goodman-of-the-house,"[2] he replied.

"Thy countenance is like unto the face of a priest whom I have somewhere seen in this city of Jerusalem," I answered. "But thy dwelling-place is like the dwelling-place of a king, fashioned somewhat after the pattern of the kings' palaces of the days of Abraham. Art thou a king?"

"Thou speakest as one beside thyself, my son,"

[1] Mark xiv. 14. [2] Luke xxii. 11.

the goodman replied. "How knowest thou the fashion of kings' palaces of the days of Abraham? In his days, this city of Jerusalem was not yet built."

"True, good master, this city was not built in the days of Abraham. But I have read that on this same spot where Jerusalem now standeth there once stood the city of Salem, from which Jerusalem derived the greater part of her name.[1] And I have also read that Melchizedek was king of Salem,[2] and also a priest of God Most High, a man without father, mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, a great man, a good man, abiding a priest continually.[3] Unto him Abraham paid tithes. Art thou Melchizedek?"[4]

"I am the goodman-of-the-house," he replied. "By that name the Master knoweth me, and by that name shall I be called."[5]

"But the disciples did not know thee," I replied. "For they were directed to thine house by the pitcher which thy servant was bearing.[6] Yet the disciples have been ever with the Lord. How, then, did Jesus know thee so well and the disciples know thee not at all? And when didst thou agree with Him to provide a guest-chamber for Him and His disciples to keep the feast of the passover? Dost thou not fear lest the Jews expel thee from their synagogues, destroy thy beau-

[1] Joseph, Ant. i., 10, 2; Wars vi. 9, 1.
[2] Gen. xiv. 18.
[3] Heb. vii. 1-4.
[4] Heb. vii. 8.
[5] Mark xiv. 14.
[6] Luke xxii. 10.

tiful home, and slay thee with the sword, because thou dost provide shelter for the Nazarene?"

"Fret not thyself, my son, nor let thy soul be troubled. The Jews will never annoy, find nor slay the goodman-of-the-house. Neither shall the apostles identify me any more at all hereafter. I have leased this house for a number of years, I have paid the hire thereof, and unto Jesus and His apostles I have given it until the time be fulfilled."

As he spake these words, Judas Iscariot, his face flushed with anger and indignation, rushed down the stairway and out of the door. He went hurriedly toward the assembly of chief priests in the temple.

"Arise, now, my son," said the goodman-of-the-house to me, "and I will go with thee across the brook, Kidron, where there is a garden, and I will show thee things which must shortly come to pass."

As we passed outside the city-gate, the darkness of that cloudy night settled thickly down upon the valley, until I fancied that I could feel its oppressive weight. I reached forth my hand to his and said,

"Lead me by thy hand, lest I lose my way; for the night is very dark, and I know not where the garden is."

"Fear not," he replied, "but stand thou here with me, and hear what the murmuring brook doth say in this solemn midnight hour."

And as I stood there on that bridge, above that

little crooked stream, I heard the rippling waters repeat the poet's song, in measured tones and minor strains,

> "Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams,
> Bridged over by our broken dreams —
> Behind the misty capes of years,
> Close to the great fount of tears,
> The garden lies.
> Strive as you may,
> Thou canst not miss it in thy way.
> All paths that have been or shall be,
> Pass somewhere through Gethsemane."

"Is this the bridge of Sighs and Sorrows?" I asked.

"Thou sayest it, my son. For here shall the Son of man be betrayed."

"Where, then, is the angel who promised to meet me here?" I asked.

"Come with me into the garden and thou shalt see him," he replied. "For behold, while we tarried in the valley, Jesus and His disciples have passed over before us and have already entered Gethsemane."

Presently I heard the voice of supplication, as of one agonizing in prayer. And as I drew near, behold, it was Jesus. And His sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground. About a stone's cast away, I saw Peter, James and John fast asleep, unconscious of the great agony through which their Master was passing. And as Jesus was about to fall prostrate upon the earth, behold, an angel appeared and strengthened Him. When I saw the

angel, I was exceeding glad, and ran and fell down at his feet and worshipped.

"Art thou the angel who vanished out of my sight when, in the hour of the Master's temptation, thou didst minister unto Him in the wilderness?" I asked.

"Why dost thou ask after my name?" he replied. "Angels are but as the thoughts of the great Jehovah's mind. In the hour of His temptation in the wilderness, Jesus fought alone with Satan and vanquished him. But now, after a little season,[1] Satan hath returned again, as he said, and hath marshalled all the forces of hell for a great and final struggle with the Son of man. And as thou didst see me there in the hour of His first temptation,[2] so now also thou dost see me here in the hour of His trial.[3] If thou canst say that the thought of God then, is identical with the thought of God now, or that thine own thought of yesterday is identically the same as thy thought of to-day, then thou mayest say of me that I am he who vanished out of thy sight at the place where Elijah was caught up into heaven. Follow me now, therefore, as thou didst follow me then. Look toward Jerusalem and tell me what thou dost see."

"I see a great multitude with lanterns and torches[4] and swords and staves,[5] coming out of the eastern gate, winding their way in a zigzag, serpent-like path down into the valley and close

[1] Luke iv. 13. [2] Matt. iv. 11. [3] Luke xxii. 43.
[4] John xviii. 3. [5] Matt. xxvi. 47.

to the garden gate," I replied. "I hear the hissing of their curses and the ribaldry of their coarse jests."

"By the reflected light of their torches, what dost thou see in the garden?" queried the angel.

"I see Peter rubbing his sleepy eyes,[1] arousing his fellow-disciples, unsheathing his sword, preparing for war.[2] I see Jesus stepping forward to meet the multitude at the gate."[3]

"Then be thou still and hear what He shall say," replied the angel.

"Whom seek ye?" rang out the clear and tranquil voice of the Master, as He stood at the garden gate.

"Whom seek ye?" came back the echo on the midnight air, from over against the temple where the Shekinah was supposed to conceal the divine presence, from over against the tomb of David and the kings of Judah, from the brow of Calvary and the valley of Kidron, from the plains of Bethlehem and the wilderness of Judea. When the multitude heard that masterly voice and the thousand echoes that returned, they fell upon their faces to the ground, as though the earth had quaked beneath their feet.[4] But rising up quickly, they ran forward to seize Jesus. Then Peter charged upon them with his drawn sword,[5] and made for the captain of the guard, the high priest's servant, and smote off his ear at the first stroke. Quickly his hand was uplifted again, and made

[1] Mark xiv. 42. [2] Luke xxii. 49. [3] John xviii. 4.
[4] John xviii. 6. [5] John xviii. 10.

ready to thrust the deadly instrument into the captain's heart, when Jesus caught his arm, and holding it with a firm grasp, exclaimed, in the presence of the chief priests, high captains and scribes,

"Peter, put up thy sword into the sheath.[1] Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech My Father and He shall even now send Me more than twelve legions of angels?[2] How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?[3] The cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"[4]

And when He had spoken these words, the disciples left Him and fled.[5] And the officers of the Jews laid hands on Him, and bound Him, and led Him away.[6]

[1] John xviii. 11.
[2] Matt. xxvi. 53.
[3] Matt. xxvi. 54.
[4] John xviii. 11.
[5] Matt. xxvi. 56.
[6] John xviii. 12.

V

PILATE'S WIFE

"I HAVE now an errand in the city," said the angel unto me, as the multitude disappeared out of sight. "Wilt thou go with me into the governor's chamber?"

"Hast thou a message for the governor?" I asked.

"Yea, I must tell him to write a superscription like this," he replied, holding up before my eyes a scroll on which was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin, "Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jews."[1]

"Take thou then my hand in thine, and lead me whithersoever thou thyself wouldst go," I replied. "For the night is dark, and the air itself doth seem surcharged with forebodings of evil, as though demons walk to and fro in the earth to-night, whispering thoughts of fiendish crimes and hideous scenes. Do not leave me nor forsake me, until the daylight dawneth."

"It shall be according to thy word, my child. But know thou, before it cometh to pass, that this night thou shalt see strange things, which shall be unto all generations for such a wonder as the human mind cannot understand. This is

[1] John xix. 19.

a night in which decisions are to be made by men, governors and nations, which shall affect the history of the whole world throughout all the ages yet to come."

As he said these words, he reached forth and took my hand in his. And the next instant I stood with him in the governor's chamber, where a woman lay asleep on a king's bed. Her head rested upon a soft, white cushion of fine linen, embroidered with needle work of much skill. With his beautiful white hand, the angel lifted one silken lock of raven black hair which lay carelessly upon her cheek, and whispered something into her ear. Immediately the countenance of her face was changed to an expression of terror and alarm. Her hands moved and clutched convulsively, as when one experiences sensations of unspeakable agony.

"Why didst thou speak thus unto her?" queried I of the angel.

"That her husband may be warned by extraordinary means, since this is an extraordinary occasion," he replied. "For she hath been a true and faithful helpmeet to her husband, and hath shared all his honors. But now she must also share his shame and suffer with him in his despair. It is woman's fate."

While he was saying this, she awoke from her slumbers. And, rising up quickly, she lifted the curtain at her chamber window and looked out into the street. The clouds had disappeared from the sky, and the sun was rising in the glory

of his full strength over Mount Olivet. In the temple, the priests were preparing the morning sacrifice, but the worshippers there were few. The whole city had come together before Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judea, to see Jesus arraigned for trial. The Jews had induced the governor to come out to them, that they might not defile themselves by going into his judgment-hall.[1] Therefore Pilate's wife, from her chamber window, obtained a sweeping, unobstructed view of the whole situation. She dropped the curtain, turned herself about, donned a long white silken robe, then nervously lifted the curtain again. There in the distance she saw her husband, sitting on his judgment-seat. Before him stood the Nazarene, waiting calmly the fate which she saw impending. Close to Pilate, almost touching his elbows and frowning in his face, she saw Annas and Caiaphas, Alexander and Rufus, chief priests, scribes and Pharisees, in their sacerdotal robes, nagging and prodding and threatening and urging the governor to give sentence in accordance with their wishes.

Instantly she dropped the curtain again, and hastening into Pilate's audience-room, took from his desk a parchment bearing the seal of his official stamp, and wrote thereon,

"Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him."[2]

Then calling for her favorite page, a ruddy,

[1] John xviii. 28, 29. [2] Matt. xxvii. 19.

dark-eyed youth, attired in a fine linen garment of blue with a scarlet girdle, she put the note in his hands and said,

"Take thou this scroll and deliver it with thine own hands unto the governor. Make haste and tarry not."

And when the hurrying feet of the page had gone forth into the street, she came again to the chamber window. She marked how the Son of man stood there before Pilate, with princely bearing like a captive king; how Pilate nervously twitched his hands and seemed bewildered, as if entangled in an evil dream where demons were whispering dark hints of unworded crimes. She looked upon the riotous multitude which no man could number, and compared their turbulent, excited, vindictive countenances with the calm, sweet, submissive face of the One who looked to her like the Son of God, standing among sinful men.

"A woman from Galilee who saith she is a nobleman's wife, desireth to speak with thee," announced a maid, who noiselessly entered the room and approached her unawares.

"Thou didst frighten me," exclaimed Procula, dropping the curtain instantly and facing about with fluttering heart and shortened breath.

"Bid her come into the governor's audience-room, where I will see her by and by," commanded Procula.

"She desireth greatly to see thee at once," replied the maid.

"I will see her immediately," answered Procula, who now began to imagine the nature of her errand.

Only a few moments intervened before the two women were face to face in the governor's audience-room.

"Claudia Procula," exclaimed the voice of one whom I recognized as Joanna, the companion of Mary, "I am Joanna, the widow of the nobleman of Capernaum, and I have come to entreat thee in behalf of the Nazarene who now standeth trial before thy husband. This Jesus of Nazareth is a righteous man, whom the Jews have delivered up for envy.[1] The governor can find no fault in Him.[2] But I fear that He will not stand firm against the entreaties and threats of the high priest and his kinsfolk, who have determined that this man shall die. As Esther in the palace of Shushan,[3] or as Salome, the sister of Herod the Great in Jericho,[4] interceded in behalf of those who were unrighteously oppressed and delivered them, so I pray thee that thou, Claudia Procula, wife of Pontius Pilate, procurator of all Judea, wilt come now with me and go before thy husband and plead for this man's release."

"Who is this man, and why do the Jews envy Him?" asked Procula.

"This is Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter's son,"[5] replied Joanna. "He is also the Son of God, the Christ that should come into the world.

[1] Matt. xxvii. 18. [2] Luke xxiii. 4. [3] Esther vii. 3.
[4] Joseph, Ant. xvii., 8, 2. [5] Mark vi. 3.

He doeth many mighty works, healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind and raising the dead. But because He cometh as a God of love, peace, joy and good will to men, going in and out among the homes of the people, comforting the distressed, honoring the poor, and rescuing sinners, therefore the Jews are not willing to believe in Him. The Jews say that when the Christ cometh, He will come not as a plain laboring man, the son of a carpenter, but as a mighty potentate of the wealthier and higher class, identifying Himself with the high priest, elders and chief Jews, instead of with sinners and common people. But Jesus teacheth all men that the principles of righteousness can be obtained apart from the services of the temple, and that it is not necessary to have the favor of the priests in order to obtain favor with God. All the people are receiving His doctrine with joy, and the whole world is going after Him. Therefore the Jews envy Him, because of His wisdom, power and popularity."

"Hath He been tried before the Sanhedrim and condemned to death?" queried Procula.

"Yea, He hath been tried before an assembly that claimed to be the Sanhedrim,"[1] replied Joanna, "but only those who were known to be His enemies, were notified of the meeting. Nicodemus was not there.[2] Gamaliel was not there.[3] Joseph of Arimathea was not there.[4] If such men as these had been there, they would have lifted their voices in Jesus' behalf until the day of Pen-

[1] Matt. xxvi. 57. [2] John iii. 2. [3] Acts v. 34. [4] John xix. 38.

tecost arriveth, before they would have signed His death warrant, or allowed Him to be unjustly condemned.

"Caiaphas sent messengers late last night to call only such members of the Sanhedrim as he well knew would vote to condemn Jesus. John, the son of Zebedee, a friend of Jesus, and one of His chosen apostles, is also known to the high priest, and was permitted to be present at the trial.[1] From him I have learned that Judas Iscariot, the apostle who betrayed Him, was there. And when he saw that the Master had surrendered Himself into the hands of men, that all might see what men will do even unto the Son of God when once they have the power over Him, even men who are professedly the most pious and religious in the world; and when he saw the Master spat upon and smote with the palms of wicked hands, buffeted and condemned to death, yet meekly suffering unnumbered indignities, he repented himself of what he had done. And when he saw Jesus bound and being led to the judgment-hall of Pilate, he ran forth into the sanctuary and cast down the thirty pieces of silver and exclaimed, 'I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood.[2] I now return this money and demand that this man be released.' But they jeered at him, and spat upon him and told him that it is much easier to get into sin than it is to get out of it. And that as for his conscience and fate, they cared nothing whatever.

[1] John xviii. 15, 16. [2] Matt. xxvii. 3, 4.

They told him, too, that it is a part of their religion to look out for themselves, regardless of what becomes of others. He then spoke piteously of his great remorse. But they laughed him to scorn and said, 'What is that to us? See thou to that.'[1] Whereupon Judas rushed forth out of the city, throwing dust upon his head and exclaiming, 'Woe is me! woe is me! for I am undone. I have betrayed innocent blood. Nobody careth for my soul.' And he went and killed himself."

"That is the end of my dream!" exclaimed Procula. "For last night I had a terrible dream. Dost thou believe in dreams, Joanna?"

"I know not how to answer thee, Procula," replied Joanna. "For I have dreamed dreams that have come true in part. But why a dream should come true in part and not altogether, I cannot understand. Neither do I understand how a dream can foresee future events, unless it be true that angels keep watch at our bedsides and sometimes whisper in our ears while we sleep. Abraham saw in a dream how his seed should sojourn in Egypt for four hundred years in bondage.[2] Jacob saw in a dream, a ladder extended between the earth and heaven, with angels ascending and descending upon it.[3] Joseph, the son of Jacob, saw in a dream the sun and the moon and the eleven stars make obeisance unto him, which signified unto him beforehand that which came to pass in after years.[4]

[1] Matt. xxvii. 4. [2] Gen. xv. 12, 13. [3] Gen. xxviii. 12. [4] Gen. xxxvii. 5-11.

Pharaoh dreamed of the seven years of famine, and thereby saved Egypt from being overthrown.[1] Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of the rise and fall of empires for a thousand years to come.[2] Gideon heard the dream of a common heathen soldier in the camp of the Midianites, and he recognized in that dream the prophecy of the great victory that came to him the next day.[3] I am told, and I partly believe it, that a crowd of witnesses around us, are holding us in full survey[4] as when, in a theatre, we see the actors on the stage. And that sometimes God permitteth them to warn us of the pitfalls in our pathway, and of the calamities about to come, that we may know the Lord taketh account of us, and writeth down all our deeds in His book."[5]

"Crucify Him! crucify Him!"[6] came the voice of a great multitude like the uproaring of all Jerusalem in the streets. Joanna heard the words, and sprang to her feet, as if startled by some frightful apparition. Procula threw up her hands convulsively, her face grew pale as death, and her eyes glared wildly, as though a horrible vision had just dawned upon her soul.

"Claudia Procula!" exclaimed Joanna, "come thou with me and let us go unto Pilate and strengthen him against the machinations of the chief priests and the multitudes, that he fall not into their hands and become their instrument for accomplishing this foul deed."

[1] Gen. xli. 25. [2] Dan. ii. 28. [3] Judges vii. 13–15.
[4] Heb. xii. 1. [5] Mal. iii. 16. [6] Luke xxiii. 21.

"I have sent a letter already unto him," replied Procula. "And even now my page is perchance delivering it into his hands. Come thou with me to my chamber window where we may see what the multitude doeth."

And into the chamber they came.

VI

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

THE curtain was drawn aside, that both of them might see. And out there, before the whole multitude, sat Pilate on the judgment-seat, holding in his hands the scroll which Procula his wife had sent him. The high priest, arrayed in a peculiar white dress, white girdle and mitre, such as he weareth only during the feast of the passover, and even then only on the day of the atonement, when he is ready to enter the Most Holy Place of the temple to make atonement for the sins of all the people, stood at Pilate's right hand, speaking into his ear. Before the judgment-seat stood the Nazarene, stretched with cords and thongs to a wooden frame, His back laid bare before the multitude and quivering with the sting of lashes, as the centurion scourged[1] Him with rods that drew blood at every stroke.

The perplexed and awe-stricken face of Pilate was decidedly relieved when the last cruel stroke of the thirty and nine was over. Then the soldiers unbound their prisoner, arrayed Him in a scarlet robe,[2] put a crown of thorns upon His head,[3] pressed its sharp points down deep into His brow, spat upon Him,[4] struck Him with

[1] Matt. xxvii. 26.
[2] Matt. xxvii. 28.
[3] Matt. xxvii. 29.
[4] Matt. xxvii. 30.

their hands[1] and, kneeling down before Him in mockery,[2] exclaimed,

"Hail, king of the Jews!"

At a signal from the high priest, the multitude joined in tumultuous applause, shouting themselves hoarse with demoniacal delight. They wagged their heads, clapped their hands and exclaimed in one accord, with deafening voice,

"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

The high priest bowed to the assembly and smiled approvingly. The elders and scribes nodded their assent. Then again came the united cry of the multitude,

"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Pilate moistened his lips and pressed them between his teeth, flushed red with furious indignation, looked upon his soldiery as if wondering whether he were able to slay those accursed priests and disperse that riotous assembly. Then he trembled as a king fallen into the hands of his enemies.

"Away with Him!" cried Annas, as the voice of the multitude subsided.

"Why, what evil hath He done?[3] I find no fault in Him," exclaimed Pilate, his patience at last exhausted, his eyes fixed upon the crumpled scroll which he held in his nervous hands.

"If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend,"[4] shouted the high priest, facing Pilate,

[1] John xix. 3.
[2] Matt. xxvii. 29.
[3] Mark xv. 14.
[4] John xix. 12.

but glancing sidewise at the multitudes for their applause.

"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" came again like a spontaneous outburst of all the demons of hell enraged for vengeance.

Pilate opened again the scroll which his wife had sent, and read once more the strange words of that epistle: "Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him."

Joanna observed the perplexity of his face which followed the reading of that note and asked,

"What didst thou write unto him, Claudia Procula?"

"I wrote unto him of a dream I had this morning while I lay upon my bed. But I told him not what the dream was. He knoweth well that Herod the Great, whose throne he now occupieth, once had, in his dreams, visions of future events which came to pass.[1] And I warned him that to pass unjust judgment upon this man, would cause him to suffer many things."

"Then thou dost truly believe in dreams?" queried Joanna.

"If I should say that I do, my friends would laugh me to scorn," replied Procula. "For oftentimes a dream ariseth out of the perplexity of a multitude of cares and misgivings, or out of the aches and pains of a tired body. But last night

[1] Joseph, Ant. xiv., 15, 11.

was the most horrible, portentous night I ever spent in my life. Early in the evening, the high priest and the temple officers came to the governor for authority to arrest the Nazarene, declaring that they had evidence of His intentions to organize a rebellion against Cæsar and attempt to establish Himself as king of the Jews in this Roman province. After they had obtained the warrant, all night long I could hear the threatening voices of men cursing in the streets. I heard the clattering of riotous feet and the fiendish yelling of the multitudes, as if the city itself were possessed of devils.

"At midnight I arose and, looking out of my chamber window, I saw the rulers of the Jews hurrying hither and thither in great excitement, now in this street, now in that. Alarmed at the sight, I awoke the governor. He calmed my nerves somewhat by saying that the Sanhedrim was being called together, at the high priest's house, to examine the Nazarene,[1] because one of the disciples of Jesus had betrayed Him into their hands.

"I fell asleep again. But when the high priest came with the centurions before the break of day, and clamored for the governor to appear at once upon the judgment-seat, without giving him time to eat his morning meal, I felt that something terrible was about to happen. I protested that he should not go. But the high priest was persistent, insolently persistent, and the

[1] Mark xv., 1.

governor, desiring to please the Jews, went forth with them to the judgment-hall.

"I lay down upon my bed again, and tossed upon my pillow until I fell asleep. And I saw a vision of angels looking over the parapets of heaven, beholding the Nazarene standing before my husband receiving a culprit's sentence to die on a cross. And around the judgment-seat whereon my husband sat, I saw an innumerable company of the Jews, and they had mouths every one like the mouths of scorpions and vipers.[1] And they sought to fasten their fangs on the Nazarene. Then in my dream, I saw the hosts of angels rush to a great white throne, and cry out to Him that sat thereon, 'Behold, the children of men seek to slay Thy Son! Let us go down that we may deliver Him out of their hands and take vengeance upon His adversaries!' But the voice of Him that sat upon the throne replied,

"'Suffer it to be so now. Now is the judgment of this world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. The Son of man goeth even as it is written of Him; but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed. Good were it for that man if he had not been born.'[2]

"Then all the angels fell down upon their faces before the throne and wept.

"And out of the midst of the throne, there came forth one like unto Elijah the prophet, with

[1] Matt. xxiii. 33. [2] Mark xiv. 21.

a countenance like the wrath of God. He had in his hand a rod like the staff on which Moses leaned when he brought the plagues of Egypt upon Pharaoh. And he came and stood beside the Nazarene before the judgment-seat. Lifting up his right hand toward Jesus, in the presence of all that multitude, he pointed to this Son of man and exclaimed, 'This is the Son of God.'[1]

"When the multitude heard that saying, all the people beat their breasts, cast off their clothes, threw dust into the air and cried out with a great voice, 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him! His blood be on us and our children.'[2]

"And when they had said this, behold, Elijah smote the earth with the staff in his hand. And the earth quaked[3] and opened her mouth and swallowed up the judgment-seat and him that sat upon it. The walls of Jerusalem fell down, and the temple was consumed with fire. The multitude was scattered to the four winds of the earth to dwell among the nations as the offscouring of the people, to wander to and fro as sheep without a shepherd, despised by all men, persecuted by all nations and trodden upon by the Gentiles, until, in sackcloth with ashes, they repented of their deed and cried unto God for mercy.

"And when I saw it, I hastened unto the chasm into which my husband had fallen. There, deep down in the earth, covered with shame and humiliation, I saw him draw a sword and thrust it

[1] John i. 34. [2] Matt. xxvii. 25. [3] Matt. xxvii. 51.

into his heart. And I beheld his dying agony.[1] Then was I about to throw myself into the abyss where he had fallen, when lo, I awoke and it was all a dream.

"Startled by this vision and believing that it came to me from heaven, I immediately sent a letter warning my noble husband against having anything to do with this righteous man. And I feel assured that he will hearken to the voice of his wife."

"What doeth he now?" queried Joanna, as she looked toward the judgment-hall.

"He taketh water and washeth his hands before the multitude," replied Procula, "signifying by that sign that he is innocent of the blood of this righteous man. Did I not tell thee that he would hearken unto the voice of his wife?"[2]

"What meaneth then that cross that they make ready? Will Pilate not save Him?" asked Joanna, becoming much excited.

"The governor doeth nothing. He taketh no part. The Jews can now have their own way and hold themselves responsible for the consequences. That is right and perfectly just. He Himself is a Jew, and He falleth into the hands of His brethren."

Joanna smote upon her breast and wrung her hands in agony. Her face was the picture of indignation and disappointment combined. Turning to Procula, she hysterically proclaimed,

"Yea, Pilate hath indeed hearkened unto the

[1] Smith's Dict. Bible, Art. Pilate. [2] Gen. iii. 17.

voice of his wife, as Adam hearkened unto the voice of Eve. Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.[1] Pontius Pilate cannot thus escape the judgment of God. He hath made his choice and hath chosen the friendship of the Jews rather than the friendship of the Nazarene. Thy dream is yet to be fulfilled.[2] Would to God that Elijah might come this day in power and smite the earth with a curse!"

When she had said this, she straightway fled in great haste, through the governor's audience-room, out into the street, and hastened to the company of the disciples.

Then the angel said unto me,

"Arise, let us go hence."

And I arose and followed him.

He carried me away I know not whither. But under an olive-tree on a hillside, there we sat down. And he was sad, exceedingly sad. In silence he bowed his head to the earth until after the hour of the morning sacrifice had passed. Then he anointed my eyes and said unto me,

"Set now thy face toward Calvary and tell me what thou dost see."

"I see Jesus nailed to a cross between two thieves," I replied. "And He groaneth as though He were bearing the agonies of all the world."

"Yea, He suffereth all that for thee," the angel replied. "But what else dost thou see?"

"I see Mary, His mother, leaning on the arm

[1] Gal. vi. 7. [2] Ency. Britannica, Art. Pilate.

of the apostle, John, and weeping as though her heart would break. At her side I see her sister, Salome, the faithful Joanna, Mary Magdalene and other women."[1]

"Seest thou aught else?" he asked.

"Yea, I see a vast multitude which no man can number, chief priests, scribes, Pharisees, soldiers, servants, Jews, Romans, Greeks, Arabians, Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, representatives of every nation under heaven. And they rail upon Him and wag their heads and say, 'He saved others, Himself He cannot save. If He is the king of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross and we will believe on Him.'"[2]

"What more dost thou see?" he asked.

"Behold, darkness hath come upon the face of all the earth, and I see nothing at all,"[3] I replied.

"Then stay thou here, hard by this tomb of Joseph,[4] and be thou silent till I come again."

And at his word I sat myself down upon a great stone and looked toward Calvary. And I heard the agonizing voice of Jesus exclaim,

"Eloi, Eloi, lama, sabachthani!"[5]

And I understood not its meaning. But immediately there came a great shout from the people saying,

"This man calleth for Elijah! Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save Him!"[6]

And when I heard that saying, I straightway

[1] John xix. 25. [2] Matt. xxvii. 29–42. [3] Matt. xxvii. 45.
[4] Matt. xxvii. 60. [5] Mark xv. 34. [6] Matt. xxvii. 47-49.

stood up in much excitement and great expectation to see what would come to pass. And immediately Jesus cried again with a loud voice. And the echo of that voice was as the noise of distant thunder, pealing forth from above Jerusalem out of the angry clouds of an impending storm. And straightway the heavens grew darker. The lightnings flashed, the earth quaked, the rocks were rent, the tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised up and came forth out of their graves.[1] The frightened multitude fled away to the city in one wild, headlong flight, smiting their breasts and crying aloud,

"Truly this man was the Son of God!"[2]

And as they entered the city, I looked and behold, the heavens were darkest of all above the many-spired golden dome of the temple. And out of the midst of that black darkness, there fell a thunderbolt of God's wrath, a sharp, quick, terrible flash, followed instantly by a trembling of the great foundations, the quivering of the mighty pillars, the rattling of falling spires and the rushing forth into the streets of the excited priests, crying,

"Alas, alas! the veil of the temple is rent in twain from the top to the bottom,[3] and the glory of the Holy Place is destroyed."

And as I looked round about me, behold, there stood before me in the darkness, a man out of the tombs. And he held the familiar little

[1] Matt. xxvii. 50-53 [2] Matt. xxvii. 54. [3] Mark xv. 38.

book in his hands. His dress was like unto one of the prophets of the days of Ahab, his eyes flashed forth as the lightning and his countenance was exceedingly fierce.

"Thus it behooved Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory," he said, as he rolled up the parchment and laid it away in the cleft of the rock. Then his face became calm, like the face of the man I saw in the cave who held before my closing eyes the magical wand of Moses.

And then I heard the echo of the voice of Jesus returning in accents sweet across the plains of Bethlehem, saying, as the daylight returned and the darkness disappeared,

"It is finished! It is finished."[1]

And I knew that another vision was ended.

[1] John xix. 30.

Sixth Vision

I

FRIGHTENED SOLDIERS

"ROBE now thyself with this garment of spotless white," said the angel unto me as, in my dream, he came again into my presence, bearing in his hands a change of shining raiment such as the saints in heaven wear.

"Then will I be like unto the angels," said I, as I reached forth my hand for the dazzling apparel.

"Nay, my child," he replied, "be not thou thus deceived. A man dressed in shining raiment is not an angel. This is the stumbling-block over which the scribes and Pharisees have fallen. For they think that because they are neatly clad or richly dressed, they are holy in the sight of God. But in His sight they are as whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are filled with dead men's bones and all uncleanness.[1] Even Satan doth sometimes transform himself into the garments of an angel of light, like as he was clothed, when, in the wilderness, thou didst behold him tempting the Master. Mark thou my words, my son, and write them

[1] Matt. xxiii. 27, 28.

down upon the tablets of thine heart,[1] 'Men clothed in shining raiment are not angels.'"

"Why then dost thou command me, a sinful man, to be clothed in these garments of spotless white?" I asked.

"That thou mightest know, my son, that only such as have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and made them white and clean, can ever henceforth walk with angels, or see visions of the great white throne.[2] Therefore I left thee here that I might go and bring thy robes. And while I tarried in my Father's house, what hast thou seen?"

"I saw one like unto the prophet Elijah standing by the threshold of yonder cave. His face was as the lightning, exceeding fierce, and his countenance was as one longing to have vengeance upon the children of this generation,[3] just as he once took vengeance upon the priests of Baal, because they railed against our Lord and mocked Him in His dying agony. And in his hands, he held a little book which he laid in the cleft of the rock, as he withdrew again into the cave."

"What was the manner of his dress?" the angel asked.

"He was clothed in raiment of camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins. But why dost thou, an angel, ask after the manner of his dress?"

"Because, my child, thou shalt see him again.

[1] Prov. iii. 3. [2] Rev. vii, 10–14. [3] Luke ix. 54.

But he will be clothed in other raiment henceforth, even raiment as dazzling as this thou hast. For the days of his humiliation are past. In his new dress, thou wilt not recognize him until thou seest the booklet in his hand. But didst thou see ought else whilst thou wast standing here alone?"

"Yea, my lord, I saw Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus the teacher of Israel, take the body of the Nazarene from the cross, embalm it in costly linen, bring it to an honorable burial in this garden here before our eyes in Joseph's own tomb.[1] Seest thou that great stone yonder, which they rolled against the door of the tomb where the body of Jesus lay?[2] When they had rolled that stone against it, they went away. But presently there came a company of soldiers from the high priest's guard in the temple, and surrounded the tomb, sealed the stone and now keep watch beside it."[3]

"Dost thou know any of them by name?" he asked.

"Yea, one of them is Malchus, captain of the temple guard, the high priest's servant whom Peter smote with the sword in the garden of Gethsemane and cut off his ear.[4] Jesus, however, immediately reached forth His hand and touched his ear and it was made whole."[5]

"Thou speakest truth, my child," replied the angel. "That was the last miracle which Jesus

[1] John xix. 38–42. [2] Mark xv. 46. [3] Matt. xxvii. 66.
[4] John xviii. 10. [5] Luke xxii. 51.

did. And it was the stumbling-block over which Peter fell. Thinkest thou that Malchus hath forgotten it? Or will He yet prove to Simon Peter, and to all the world, that a kindness shown to a living enemy is better than vengeance taken with the sword? Peter's thought was to slay Malchus in the garden of Gethsemane and thus be rid of an enemy. But the thought of Jesus was to save Malchus, convert him from the error of his way and use his valuable service in a better cause. Thinkest thou that the thought of Peter falleth not far below the thought of the Master, even as a slain Malchus in the garden of Gethsemane is less glorious than a living, repentant Malchus testifying among the redeemed in after years?"

"Thou speakest, good sir, in words too lofty for human minds to reach. Pray tell me in simple language what thou dost mean."

"Then stand thou here while I go yonder," he replied, "and I will cause thee to understand. And when thou dost see the soldiers flee from my presence, thou mayest follow them until thou comest to the assembly of the apostles in Jerusalem, in the large upper room of the goodman's house. There thou shalt see a vision. And when thou seest it, remember what I have told thee."

"My shining garments!" I exclaimed, calling out unto the angel as he was departing from me. "How shall I follow them in this array, lest the apostles be affrighted by the whiteness of my

garments, and mistake me for thee, or for an angel come down from heaven? And why are not the apostles also clothed in glorious apparel?"

"Because they know not the Scriptures,"[1] he replied. "Death will always bring sore distress to them that know not the Scriptures and see no further than the grave. Death is not the end but the beginning of life. Jesus shall rise again from the dead. Behold, He is even now alive and I go to roll the stone away from His grave. He shall come forth in triumph and, as a glorified Lord, He shall conquer the world. Jesus is not a victim, as they now think, but a victor, as they shall soon see. Though they be His chosen apostles, they are slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written.[2] They believe some things which the prophets have said, but it is hard for them to believe all. Therefore are they in sackcloth and ashes, sore troubled and perplexed. Therefore do vain imaginations arise in their hearts. To them it seemeth impossible that the Lamb[3] of God should become the Lion[4] of the tribe of Judah; that He who saved others did not save Himself; that the Son of God could suffer death; that the never-ending kingdom of heaven could suffer the loss of its King. Even now they are gathered together, vainly trying to harmonize their preconceived notions of the Christ and His kingdom with the terrible sufferings they saw on the cross, the unquestionable fact of His final death, and the sudden collapse

[1] Luke xxiv. 45. [2] Luke xxiv. 25. [3] John i. 29. [4] Rev. v. 5.

of all their hopes when they saw the humiliating sight of the One they loved, dying among common thieves and outcasts. Without a revelation from on high, they are hopelessly entangled in the network of their own unbelief. They believe some things, but not all things which the prophets have said. But fear thou not. Their eyes are holden that they cannot see thee nor the brightness of thy raiment."

When he had said this, he passed on and entered into the garden gate, manifested himself to the guard, rolled the stone away from the tomb in the presence of the astonished soldiers and quickly sat down upon it. His appearance was as lightning and his raiment white as snow.[1]

Paralyzed with fear, the soldiers stood there for a little while like dead men,[2] beholding the sight with eyes wide open and protruding from their sockets, limbs motionless and stiff, lips quivering and pale. And while their eyes were fixed upon the angel, their knees smote one against the other and they were sore afraid. Suddenly the earth quaked[3] beneath their feet and threw them on their faces to the ground. Instantly they sprang up and fled headlong from that mysterious presence in one pell-mell, precipitous flight toward Jerusalem.[4] As they turned the brow of Olivet, where the road runneth close to the steep banks of Kidron, Malchus, still running with all his might, glanced back-

[1] Matt. xxviii. 2, 3.
[2] Matt. xxviii. 2.
[3] Matt. xxviii. 4.
[4] Matt. xxviii. 11.

ward to get one last glimpse of the strange appearance in the distance. And as he did so, my dazzling raiment following closely at his heels, seemed to have met his eye.

He sprang suddenly forward with renewed impulse, uttered one wild shriek of anguish, stumbled against a rolling stone, and fell headlong into the ditch. Smarting with pain, dazed with excitement, frantic with fear, he plunged into the shrubbery of the further bank, and made straight up the rugged cliffs toward the nearest city gate. And not until it had closed behind him, did he pause to rest or stop to inquire into the welfare of his comrades or their fate. And not until they were all safely entered into the court of the high priest's palace, did the soldiers cease to tremble.[1]

While the chief priests and Caiaphas reasoned together concerning all these things, I left them and went unto the company of the disciples.

[1] Matt. xxviii. 12.

II

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

FORTY days afterward, while I was yet with the disciples, beholding all things whatsoever they did, we were in the large upper room of the goodman's house in Jerusalem. Mary the mother of Jesus, Salome the mother of James and John, Joanna the mother of Bar-Chuza, Mary Magdalene and other devout women, abode in the same house, and were accustomed to meet with the apostles, morning, noon and night, at the hours of prayer. Jesus frequently appeared to them during their worship, and they were rejoicing continually before the Lord. It was about the hour of the morning sacrifice when Bar-Chuza came in to worship with Malchus at his side.

As they entered the room, Malchus walked straight forward, with hand extended toward where Peter was seated. And taking the apostle by the hand, he exclaimed,

"Blessed be God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ His Son, who hath saved my life and redeemed my soul! Once thou didst draw thy sword to take my life. I deserved to die. Mine ear felt the sharp edge of thy sword and mine heart prepared to receive the fatal thrust which thine uplifted arm had ordained for my breast.

That moment, when no other friend on earth could have saved me from instant death, thy Master stepped between thee and me and stayed thine uplifted arm with His loving hand. Then He touched my bleeding ear and it was made whole. His loving kindness, O how great! Had I fallen then by thine hand, my soul must have been lost for all eternity. I knew not what I did. But now mine eyes have been opened to recognize the great crime of that dark night. And now I abhor myself and repent in sackcloth and ashes. I am not worthy to be numbered with the disciples. But my soul longeth to worship at the feet of my crucified Lord, and to bathe them with my tears."

"Even so came I once unto Him and wiped His feet with my hair,"[1] whispered Mary Magdalene to Joanna. "And He forgave me, though I was the chief of sinners. Blessed be His holy name."

"Likewise hath He forgiven Malchus," said Bar-Chuza, who, standing by his mother, overheard Mary's remark.

"Hast thou heard that He hath risen from the dead?" asked Peter, as he held Malchus by the hand.

"Yea, I was the captain of the guard that kept watch at the tomb when the angel came and rolled the stone away. And we all fled from before the presence of the angel and returned unto the chief priests and elders. When they heard our report,

[1] Luke vii. 38.

they took counsel together and offered us money and commanded us to say to the people that while we were asleep, the disciples came and stole away the body.[1] Brethren, forgive me this wrong! Would to God the chief priests had never taught my lips to lie, nor to bear false witness against my neighbors! We were not asleep that night, neither have I ever been able to sleep soundly since that night. For this ear which the Lord gave me anew in Gethsemane hath been attuned since then to hear many strange things not lawful for polluted lips to utter. Now that I have made this confession before you whom I have wronged, I feel that a great burden is removed from my heart.[2] I implore that ye forgive me, even as He hath forgiven me, and that ye pray for me that I may have peace in my soul."

Then Peter stood up before the whole assembly and said, "Brethren, my counsel is that we receive Malchus into our fellowship, and that we inquire of him more particularly concerning the vision which he saw at the tomb, that we may take knowledge of him, and of the women who were first at the sepulchre, whether their witness agreeth together."

"It is not for me to oppose my judgment against thine," remarked Thomas, very gravely. "For I am the least of the apostles, having doubted the resurrection and the testimony of my brethren until, in His mercy and love, Jesus appeared also unto me. But I think it meet to make known

[1] Matt. xxviii. 11-15. [2] Rom. x. 8-10.

unto thee and to all the assembly, the honest doubts of my heart. Whether it be right in the sight of God for women to speak in public, and, by common consent, become teachers of men, even such chosen men as are His apostles, judge ye. For why should the disciples of Jesus have a custom in their assemblies contrary to the well-known customs of the Jews in their synagogues. I have no protest to make other than to bring this matter to the attention of my beloved brethren and to learn their judgment."

Having said this he sat down. The apostles spake one with another. Their faces were thoughtful and meditative. Their words were in accents kind, discreet, earnest, deliberative. The women consulted with one another in whispers soft. Smiles, sweet, submissive, illuminative, significant smiles played on the happy face of Mary Magdalene and on the face of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Likewise the faces of Salome and Joanna brightened up with the same joyous enlightenment, as Mary Magdalene whispered something into their ears. Finally, Peter arose and, beckoning with his hand for silence, said,

"Ye know, brethren, that Thomas hath not been always with us since our Lord was crucified.[1] Wherefore he hath not seen all that we have seen, nor heard all that we have heard. It hath pleased God to reveal to us in a most remarkable and significant way how He hath or-

[1] John xx. 24.

dained that women shall henceforth have, in the assembly of His disciples, a place equal in honor to that of men, even His choicest men. For it doth appear that when Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared first unto a woman.[1] If that woman had been His mother we might say that human ties prepared the way for this natural manifestation. But since it was Mary Magdalene to whom He first appeared, we must seek explanation of this remarkable fact in its prophetic import, rather than in its historic bearing. It is true, as our Lord affirmed to Simon the Pharisee, that Mary Magdalene loveth Him much[2] and that, in return, He hath done much for her. It is also true that she was first at the tomb.[3]

"What, then, was the lesson that our risen Lord would have us learn by appearing first to Mary Magdalene? Would He teach us that those who love Him most shall see Him first? If that be so, then why did He not first appear unto His mother? And why did He appear unto me, the one who denied Him at the trial, the one who deserved to be cast off forever? And why should He appear unto me before He did unto John, whom Jesus loved more dearly than us all?[4]

"My judgment is that we should hear from Mary Magdalene herself, what it was that Jesus said to her when first He manifested Himself after His resurrection. Perhaps that testimony may throw some light upon this question."

[1] Mark xvi. 9.
[2] Luke vii. 47.
[3] John xx. 1.
[4] Luke xxiv. 33, 34.

Thereupon Mary Magdalene arose, her face beaming with an enlightened smile, and said,

"The words which my risen Lord said unto me were these: 'Go unto My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father and My God and your God.'"[1]

Then she sat down.

"I perceive," replied Peter, after a meditative pause, "that the Lord not only appeared first unto a woman, but He also first commissioned a woman to preach the best part of His gospel. He Himself sent her with a message, not to a congregation of her own sex, but to an audience of men only. It hath pleased Him, out of the storehouse of His marvellous wisdom, to appoint a woman to instruct His chosen apostles in the foundation doctrine on which rests all our faith. And now, Thomas, if thou hadst been with us when she came with this glad message from the Lord, wouldst thou then have protested that she should not deliver it unto us?"

"Nay, verily," replied Thomas. "I never knew until now that the Lord Himself hath sent messages to men by the agency of women. But now that I have learned this fact, my judgment is, that unto whomsoever the Lord revealeth Himself and to whomsoever He giveth a message, that same person, whether man or woman, should deliver that message to the people to whom it pertaineth. I thank my God for Mary

[1] John xx. 16–18.

Magdalene and for the message she hath brought unto us."

To the sentiment of this address, all the apostles said,

"Amen."

"Malchus telleth us," said Peter, continuing to address the assembly, "that an angel came and rolled away the stone from the sepulchre and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his raiment as white as snow.[1]

"The women who first went to the sepulchre saw this same angel likewise.[2] But Mary Magdalene saith that she saw also another angel, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain.[3] Joanna and Mary the mother of James say not that they saw two angels, but that they saw two men in dazzling apparel, standing before them at the tomb.[4] And Salome saith that she likewise saw a man in white apparel, and that he was a young man sitting on the right side of the tomb.[5]

"When we first heard these things, John ran with me to the sepulchre. And we both went in. We saw the linen cloths and we saw the napkin that was upon His head rolled up in a place by itself.[6] But we saw no angels at all, neither did we see the Lord. But it doth now appear that indeed all these were seen at the open sepulchre. What think ye? Who were these three men in shining garments? Were they the

[1] Matt. xxviii. 2, 3. [2] Matt. xxviii. 5. [3] John xx. 11, 12.
[4] Luke xxiv. 4. [5] Mark xvi. 5. [6] John xx. 2–10.

three wise men who came from the east to worship the King of the Jews when He was but a babe in Bethlehem?

"On the holy Mount we saw Moses and Elijah with Him, and there He first told us plainly of His approaching death and resurrection. Think ye that Moses and Elijah accompanied Him from that time until He entered into His real glory and our eyes saw them not? Where is Melchizedek, who appeared unto Abraham, the father of the faithful, and revealed his glory thus at the very head of God's chosen people? Where is John the Baptist, the young man at Jesus' right hand, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah to be the last of the prophets, and who delighted, at our Lord's baptism, to reveal his greatest glory at Jesus' feet, declaring that the latchet of Jesus' shoes he was unworthy to unloose?[1] Men in shining raiment are not angels. Why did three men appear at the sepulchre?"

The discussion that followed was long and interesting. Many theories were given of Elijah's return, and of the reasons for his reappearance on the mount of transfiguration.

Presently, as the apostles were left alone toward the close of day, Jesus appeared and led them forth out of the city toward Bethany. And as He went, He opened their minds that they might understand the Scriptures. And He said unto them,

"Thus it is written, that the Christ should

[1] Mark i. 7.

suffer and rise again from the dead the third day."

And when He had said these things, as they were looking, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as He went, behold two men[1] stood by them in white apparel which also said,

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus which was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven."[2]

And the men in white apparel were standing on the earth with the apostles. And one of them had in his hand a small parchment taken from the cleft of the rock. His eyes were as soft as love, and his face did shine with the glory of ineffable love and unspeakable joy. And as I looked upon him, I heard a still, small voice whispering into my ears,

"Men in shining raiment are not angels."

And I thought of the man I saw in the cave of Machpelah as the vision vanished out of my sight.

[1] Acts i. 10. [2] Acts i. 11.

Seventh Vision

I

JERUSALEM TRODDEN DOWN

AND the angel appeared unto me again, as I stood on Mount Olivet. His face was looking westward over the Great Sea, and his hands were outstretched toward the setting sun. And he said unto me,

"Behold I will show thee now what hath speedily come to pass."

And I looked and the walls of Jerusalem had fallen down.[1] The temple had been consumed with fire.[2] The city had been trampled under foot.

On the mountain-side, overlooking the fallen city, seated on the sacred spot where Jesus ascended up into heaven,[3] I saw an old man with a package in his hands, a prophet's mantle wrapped about his shoulders, his hair as white as wool. Tears were streaming down his cheeks, and his eyes were fixed on Calvary.

A woman well stricken in years was kneeling at his side, with hands clasped, lifting up a

[1] Josephus' Wars, vi. 9, 4.
[2] Josephus' Wars, vi. 5, 1.
[3] Luke xxiv. 50.

prayer to heaven, and watching, through her tears, a little cloud move eastward like the one that received Jesus out of sight.[1] And seated at her side, I saw one who appeared to be her husband, his face fixed steadfastly upon the ruins of the fallen temple. And as I was looking upon them, the aged man who wore the prophet's mantle turned his eyes from Calvary to the broken walls of the Holy City and exclaimed,

"Woe unto thee, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, because thou knewest not the day of thy visitation. For this cause thou hast been dashed to the ground, even as the Master aforetime proclaimed.[2] But thou shalt be built again when the times of the Gentiles have been fulfilled. Believest thou this, Bar-Chuza?"

As he asked that question, I remembered John the apostle, Bar-Chuza and Judith.

"All things that our Master foretold have come true," replied Bar-Chuza. "I remember how in yonder road, while we cast palm branches at His feet, He wept over this city and said, 'If thou hadst known in this day even thou, the things which belong unto peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visita-

[1] Acts i. ix. [2] Luke xix. 41–44.

tion.' He wept then as we weep now. For He saw then what we see now."

"Yea, and in yonder garden," exclaimed John, pointing to Gethsemane, "He fought alone the great trial of the cross.[1] He foresaw His death then and endured its agony beforehand, while we slept and were so unconscious of how He was being betrayed.

"See how the blackened walls have fallen upon the potter's field,[2] where the body of Judas lieth to await the judgment-day, then to be rewarded according to his deeds! Strange that by means of a traitorous kiss, Israel, in the person of Jacob,[3] came into his national inheritance and by means of a traitorous kiss in the person of Judas,[4] he betrayed his trust, and forfeited his birthright in favor of the Gentiles![5] But where is Caiaphas now? Where is Pontius Pilate? Where is Herod? Yea, where are all the actors of fifty years ago? The children of that generation have passed away unto their reward, and I alone am left to weep over their graves."

When he had said this, the old man bowed his face to the ground and wept aloud.

"How clearly it doth now appear, in the light of the years that are gone," said Judith, "that they who believe in Jesus and do His will, have a greater inheritance even in this world than they who despise His name! Pilate made his choice and preferred to give up Jesus to be crucified

[1] Luke xxii. 39-46. [2] Matt. xxvii. 7. [3] Gen. xxvii. 24-29.
[4] Luke xxii. 48. [5] Luke xxi. 24.

rather than lose his high position as procurator of Judea.[1] But his kingdom was taken away and in the greatness of his despair, like Judas, he slew himself.[2] The Master told us beforehand that he who shall seek to save his life shall lose it.[3]

"Caiaphas maintained that one man should die rather than that the whole nation should perish.[4] Therefore to save the nation he put Jesus to death. But the nation hath perished and the places that knew Caiaphas shall know him no more. I rejoice that Zacchæus, my father, chose that good part that shall not be taken away from him.[5] Yea, the sweet hope long cherished of meeting again my loving parents on eternity's shore, where they wait to welcome me to their bright home on high, is worth vastly more to me than if they had left to me by their last will and testament all the wealth of Jericho, without this memory of their hope in Christ."[6]

"My father was Herod's steward," remarked Bar-Chuza, "and he was faithful unto death. He died as a brave soldier dieth. But Herod Antipas, his master, was a cruel tyrant. From the day that he hearkened to the voice of his wife and put John the Baptist to death, his kingdom began to fall.[7] My mother's dream came true. For shortly afterward, when Caius Cæsar was declared emperor of the Roman Empire, Herod Antipas and

[1] John xix. 12.
[2] Schaff-Herzog Ency., Art. Pilate.
[3] Luke ix. 24.
[4] John xi. 50.
[5] Luke x. 42.
[6] Luke xix. 9.
[7] Joseph Ant., xviii., 5, 2.

Herodias, his adulterous wife, were banished to Spain, and died in exile, utterly cast down.[1]

"When Jesus was born, Herod the Great reigned in much glory over all this land which God gave to Abraham. His grandson, Herod Agrippa, to please the Jews, put thy brother James to death with the edge of the sword.[2] But thou hast lived to see the entire family of Herods pass away with the generation that crucified the Lord."[3]

"I came not here," replied John, "to think of Judas and Caiaphas and Pilate and Herod. Hath not Solomon, in the Proverbs, said,

"'The memory of the just is blessed: But the name of the wicked shall rot'?[4]

"It is the memory of the just I have come to honor. All the way from Ephesus in Asia, I have come in my old age, that I might once again strew choicest flowers upon the graves of my mother, and of Mary the mother of my Lord, faithful women, who, with thy mother Joanna, and Mary Magdalene, accompanied us in our preaching tours through Galilee,[5] ministered unto us with glad hearts and tender hands, prepared our food, supplied us with money[6] and endured many hardships for the Master's sake. These are names of which the world is not worthy. Last at the cross, first at the tomb, faithful unto the end! Peace be unto their ashes! When the Lord cometh

[1] Johnson's Univ. Cyclo., Art. Herod.
[2] Joseph, Ant. xviii., 5, 3.
[3] Mark xv. 40, 41,
[4] Prov. x. 7.
[5] Acts xii. 2.
[6] Luke viii. 1–3.

again in glory, they shall receive their great reward."

And the old man bowed his head again to the ground and wept.

"Bar-Chuza, thinkest thou that Jerusalem shall again put on her beautiful garments and exceed her former glory?" queried the aged apostle, as once more he lifted his head from the earth and gazed upon the fallen city.

"It shall be so if the Master hath so willed it," Bar-Chuza replied. "Dost thou remember any of His words which look to such an end?"

"Yea," replied John, "the Master said that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.[1] And then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.[2] Thou knowest how it hath pleased God, by the mouth of Peter, to have the Gentiles hear the gospel and believe.[3] And thou knowest also how God hath raised up Saul of Tarsus as a chosen vessel to carry the good news of salvation to all the nations in Asia, Macedonia, Italy and Spain.[4] And these nations have received the gospel with great joy. Our risen and glorified Lord is sweeping over the western world with His power, and all nations are worshipping at His feet. These are the times of the Gentiles.

"I was in the isle which is called Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.[5] I

[1] Luke xxi. 24. [2] Luke xxi. 27. [3] Acts xv. 7.
[4] Acts ix. 15; xxii. 21. [5] Rev. i. 9, 10.

was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, 'What thou seest write in a book and send it unto the seven churches.' Then there came before my vision a cycloramic picture of all future events from this day even unto the day that Jesus cometh in glory.[1] And I tell thee now, that all the cycles of history derive their inner meaning from their relation to Jesus Christ. They can be seen in their true coloring, in their proper light and in magnificent grandeur, only when, kneeling at Jesus' feet, we see them from the standpoint of Calvary's brow.

"And in the vision which I saw, there was a first and a second resurrection.[2] In the first resurrection, I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.[3] And he laid hold on the Dragon, the old Serpent which is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years should be finished; after this he must be loosed for a little while.[4]

"I saw also the second resurrection when the Lord descended in glory. And all the dead were raised and stood before the throne to be judged according to their works.[5]

"And then I saw a new Jerusalem more glorious by far than any city the world hath ever

[1] Rev. iv. 1–xxii. 21. [2] Rev. xx. 5, 6. [3] Rev. xx. 1.
[4] Rev. xx. 2, 3. [5] Rev. xx. 11.

seen.[1] And the wall of that city had twelve foundations, and on them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."[2]

"When I heard and saw all this, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel which showed me these things.[3] But the angel would not permit me to worship him, saying with emphasis, 'See thou do it not; I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them which keep the words of this book; worship God.'"[4]

"Thinkest thou that he was Elijah the prophet instead of an angel speaking unto thee?" asked Judith.

"Who else could he have been?" queried Bar-Chuza. "For he himself declared that he was not an angel but one of the prophets that keepeth the words of this book. Angels are not 'fellow-servants' with men. And prophets who have seen death are no longer 'fellow-servants' with living men, no longer guided in their conduct by the teachings of the Scriptures. But Elijah, who hath not seen death, who is still in the world, still under the commandment of the law, still studying the Scriptures and the testimony of Jesus, is a 'fellow-servant' with the Lord's beloved apostle."

"Art thou sure that he said that he was thy 'fellow-servant'?" asked Judith.

"Yea," replied John, "I am sure. Twice he repeated those words. Once he said, 'I am a fel-

[1] Rev. xxi. 10.
[2] Rev. xxi. 14.
[3] Rev. xxii. 8.
[4] Rev. xxii. 9.

low-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus;[1] worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'

"For this reason I have sought to learn what the 'testimony of Jesus' is, that I might understand the 'spirit of prophecy.'"

"Did not Jesus say," queried Bar-Chuza, "that before He shall come in glory, Elijah will return and restore all things? May it not be that Elijah's second coming is pictured as the first resurrection, since it is written that while he was on earth he also had power to raise the dead?[2] May it not be that, as John the Baptist preceded the first coming of our Lord, so the real Elijah will precede His second coming? May it not be that the angel which thou didst see descending out of heaven with a great chain to bind the devil and Satan, was Elijah returning in power to restore all things?"

The aged apostle made no answer. Reaching his hand into the folds of his cloak, he drew out a scroll, broke the seal thereof, and pointed to the last paragraph with his index finger:

"I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book."[3]

[1] Rev. xix. 10. [2] 1 Kings xvii. 17–24. [3] Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

II

GOD'S UNREVEALED PLANS

JUDITH shuddered.

Bar-Chuza looked into the apostle's face in great amazement.

"Observe," said John, "that the Spirit hath not said through me, that Jesus Himself shall return until the second resurrection taketh place. The Spirit through Paul hath said that when Jesus cometh in glory, they that are fallen asleep in Christ, and they that are on the earth, shall be caught up in the clouds together, that the one class shall not precede the other.[1] How then do some say that the Lord shall come first for only a part of His saints, and after a thousand years are expired, He will come again for the rest of the dead?"

"What is it to us," replied Judith, "whether Elijah cometh first and restoreth all things, or whether Jerusalem is yet to outrival her former glory before our Lord cometh into His kingdom? Doth the private soldier need to know all the plans of his commander-in-chief, in order to do good service in the ranks? I have placed my trust in Him, and whether He cometh at noon or morn or night, whether I be numbered with the

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 13–18.

living or the dead, whether He cometh on the morrow or in the ages yet unborn, I shall see Him when He descendeth[1] from the heavens, and I shall rejoice with Him in glory around His great white throne."

"I, too, shall go forth to meet Him with great joy when He cometh," exclaimed John. "For I loved Him when He was on the earth and I love Him still. I hope that Elijah may return and restore all things. But I long above all else to see my Lord face to face once more, and to rest my weary head upon His breast."

"All that ye say is true," replied Bar-Chuza. "But why hath the Master spoken to us through the prophets and the apostles of the things yet to be revealed, if it is not well-pleasing in His sight for us to search diligently what or what manner of times the Spirit within them did signify?[2] Are we not commanded to search the Scriptures?[3] Can there be any task so pleasing to the mind and so healthful to the soul as to search diligently and reverently to know the mind of God and the secrets of His counsel? Hath not our father David told us in the first Psalm that blessed is the man who delighteth in the law of the Lord, and who in His law doth meditate day and night? Hath He not said that such a man shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season?"[4]

"It is one thing to know the laws of God, but quite another thing to know the plan of God,"

[1] Rev. i. 7. [2] 1 Pet. i. 11. [3] John v. 39. [4] Ps. i. 2, 3.

replied John. "The soldier who knoweth best all the laws of military service may know nothing at all of what his commander-in-chief hath planned to do. The soldier knoweth not at what hour of the night the trumpet may sound a call to fold his tent and march to other scenes. The time of our Master's coming is not for us to know. He Himself made that plain while He was with us.[1] And after He was risen from the dead, all the apostles were with Him one day on this mount, speaking of many things pertaining to His coming again in glory. And we asked Him, 'Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'[2] And He said unto us, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father hath set within His own authority.[3] But ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost has come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.'

"It is therefore certain that neither we nor the generations to come, no, nor yet the angels in heaven, can ever know the day or the hour of His coming, until it cometh to pass. And in that revelation which I beheld on the isle of Patmos, when the fifth seal was opened, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a great voice, saying, 'How long, O Master, the holy

[1] Mark xiii. 32. [2] Acts i. 6. [3] Acts i. 7, 8.

and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?' And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, which should be killed even as they were, should be fulfilled.[1]

"If therefore the secret of the time of His coming is withheld from the spirits of just men made perfect and from the disembodied souls of the martyrs, what man is there on this footstool of God's feet who can hope to obtain it?"

"The time of His coming we cannot tell, but the manner of it we know," replied Bar-Chuza. "For when the Lord ascended into heaven from this very spot where now we get our view of the fallen city which He loved, when a cloud had received Him out of sight, did not two angels appear in the sky saying to the apostles, 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven.'"[2]

"We know the manner of it, indeed," replied John, "for the angel which first appeared to me in the isle of Patmos, thus spake unto me saying, 'Behold, He cometh in the clouds and every eye shall see Him, and they which pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over Him.'[3] But why dost thou, Bar-Chuza, add to or take from the testimony of the apostles? Say

[1] Rev. vi. 9-11. [2] Acts i. 11. [3] Rev. i. 7.

not that two angels appeared in the sky delivering to us that message. Say rather that two men in white apparel, stood with us on the earth and spake these words of prophecy.[1] Men in white raiment are not angels. Men standing on the earth are not angels flying in the sky. Neither add to nor subtract from the words which the Spirit hath spoken through the apostles."

"Didst thou not say that an angel appeared to thee on the isle of Patmos?" queried Bar-Chuza. "How then was he Elijah the prophet? And how could an angel speak of himself as thy 'fellow-servant'? or as one of the prophets?"

"Thou dost forget, Bar-Chuza," the aged apostle replied, "that on the isle of Patmos I saw many visions. How sayest thou, then, that the angel who appeared to me in the opening scene of that book must of necessity have been the same angel that appeared to me in the closing vision? For while in the Spirit on that Lord's day I saw numerous angels, elders and saints. Once He that spake with me said, 'Fear not: I am the first and the last and the Living one; and I was dead and behold, I am alive forevermore. And I have the keys of death and of Hades.'"[2]

"That must have been the Master Himself, and neither angel nor prophet," remarked Judith.

"Or it may be," suggested John, "that the angels have power to represent different person-

[1] Acts i. 10. [2] Rev. i. 17, 18.

ages, sometimes appearing as men,[1] sometimes as God,[2] according to the commandment received of the Father."

"Aye, that is it!" exclaimed Bar-Chuza. "Sometimes angels appear to men in the form of men. And may it not be that the two men who, at the time of our Lord's ascension, appeared to the apostles in white apparel, were angels appearing to men in the form of men?"

"Yea, thou speakest as one skilled in the art of controversy," replied John. "It may be true as thou hast said. But canst thou explain why these two angels were commanded to appear as men? The angel who announced the birth of Christ the Lord to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, did not appear in the form of a man. Nether did the heavenly host that came with him. And when the stone was rolled from the tomb, the soldiers were frightened, not at a man in shining raiment, but at the presence of an angel of the Lord. If, as thou sayest, the men in white apparel who appeared at the ascension were angels in the form of men, then there must have been some good reason in the wise counsel of God why they should appear in that form at such a time. What, then, was that thought of God? What was the lesson to be learned therefrom? To answer these questions is far more difficult than to admit that they who appeared in white apparel were indeed only men."

"It seemeth to me," replied Bar-Chuza, "that

[1] Acts vii. 30. [2] Ex. iii. 4-6.

the question is not more difficult than the similar ones which occur in the revelation which thou didst have on the isle of Patmos. Why did the one who appeared unto thee there, appear in so many different forms at different times?"

"Speak not so, Bar-Chuza," replied John. "For in the revelation which I saw in Patmos, when the voice that spake with me was directed to the churches, it assumed the form not of angel nor prophet, but of Him who is the Head of the Church, who therefore has the right to command.[1] But when it spake of the Lord's coming in glory, it assumed the form of a prophet sent to make ready the way of the Lord.[2]

"Dost thou not remember how the Master spake a parable of the Great Supper in which the same servant was sent forth three times to invite guests to the feast? First, the servant went to them that were bidden,[3] as Elijah went to the house of Israel, God's chosen people; but they refused to come. Then was the servant sent to call in the poor and maimed and blind and lame[4] just as Elijah in the person of John the Baptist called the common people to hear the Master. Finally, the servant was sent out the third time with authority to go into the highways and hedges and constrain all the people to come in, that the house might be filled.[5] Who was that servant?"

"Was he Elijah the prophet?" asked Judith.

[1] Rev. i. 11–19. [2] Rev. xix. 7–10. [3] Luke xiv. 17.
[4] Luke xiv. 21. [5] Luke xiv. 23.

III

THE JOY OF TRUSTING IN JESUS

"I DO not say that that servant was Elijah the prophet," replied John. "For I do not know whom the Lord had in mind when He spake that parable; nor do I understand why He saw fit to state that only one servant was sent forth.[1] But I do affirm that in the revelation which I saw in the isle of Patmos, I beheld iniquity put down with a strong hand, and the marriage supper of the Lamb made ready.[2] And then there came forth to me a servant of God who said, 'Write, Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'[3] This was the servant before whose feet I fell down to worship. And he it was who said unto me, 'See thou do it not; I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'"[4]

"It would be just like Elijah to appear at such a time as that," remarked Bar-Chuza. "For he was always a terror to evil-doers. How ferociously he slew the priests of Baal![5] And how he did make King Ahab tremble in Naboth's vine-

[1] Luke xiv. 17. [2] Rev. xviii. 21. [3] Rev. xix. 9.
[4] Rev. xix. 10. [5] 1 Kings xviii. 40.

yard![1] And when King Ahaziah sent fifty men to take him prisoner, he called down fire out of heaven and devoured them.[2] If Elijah should come to earth again, then indeed would one man chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight.[3] Elijah was a man of the whirlwind[4] and was carried away in one.[5] Felix trembled before Paul,[6] but Cæsar himself would tremble before Elijah. He was always a fearful antagonist. Would to God that Herod Antipas and Herodias could have spent one hour in his company!"

"If he be so fierce as thou thinkest, why was he sent to appear on the mount of the transfiguration?" queried Judith.

"That is not hard to understand," replied John. "It was a representative group which we saw in the holy mount.[7] Moses was there as the greatest lawgiver that the world hath ever seen or ever will see again; Jesus was there as the advocate with the Father, or as the greatest law-interpreter the world hath ever seen; Elijah was there as the sheriff, or the greatest law-enforcer the world hath ever known. Jesus was the central figure of that trio, the most honored and the most glorious of them all.

"To clearly understand the real relation which Moses and Elijah sustain toward Christ the Lord, is the secret sign or shibboleth[8] without which

[1] 1 Kings xxi. 17–25.
[2] 2 Kings i. 10.
[3] Deut. xxxii. 30.
[4] 1 Kings xix. 11.
[5] 2 Kings ii. 11.
[6] Acts xxiv. 25.
[7] Matt. xvii. 3.
[8] Judges xii. 6.

no man can enter into the realms of the prophets or enjoy their fellowship."

"We know that Moses came first in the history of redemption," remarked Judith. "And I would that I could know whether Elijah cometh last and whether he will restore all things with a strong hand. But how can I know this for a surety, when even the Beloved Apostle seemeth to be in doubt concerning the mind of the Spirit regarding these things. But I do know that my Lord is a great God and that He hath redeemed my soul. His resources are infinite, and I am but the least of His servants. I know not what task He hath assigned unto Elijah and unto the martyrs to perform in the redemption of the world. I know not when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled nor whether Jerusalem shall again exceed her former glory.

"I am not skilled to understand,
What God hath wrought, what God hath planned.
I only know at His right hand,
There's One who is my Saviour."

"When the roses come again it will be fifty years since Judith and I were married," remarked Bar-Chuza. "And the Lord hath been good to us, whereof we are glad. Many changes have taken place since He raised me up from my serious sickness in Capernaum, and snatched me from the grave. The land since then hath been filled with the graves of those whom once we loved. How differently things appear to us now when, in the evening of our lives, we look back over all the changes we have seen! We realize

now, more than ever before, how good it is to serve the Lord and to look forward with joy for His coming in the clouds to raise us all from the dead."

"There is one other spot where I wish to go, before I return to my home in Ephesus," remarked the aged apostle to Bar-Chuza. "That spot is the tomb in which the goodman-of-the-house awaiteth the coming of his Lord. For it was in the upper room of the goodman's house that the Lord spake to us of the many mansions in heaven where He hath gone to prepare a home for all who love Him and where I soon shall be.[1] And in that upper room, the Lord appeared to us often. There also was the place where the Holy Spirit came down upon us on the day of Pentecost. Direct me therefore now to the tomb of the goodman-of-the-house, and then will I return to Asia, and will see thy face no more until I meet thee before the great white throne."

Southward they set their faces and journeyed toward the mountains of Horeb, until they stood at the mouth of a cave where it somehow seemed to me I had been once before. There they paused.

And kneeling down upon the threshold of that cave, the aged apostle looked up into heaven and blessed God for the faith and hope and charity of the goodman-of-the-house. When his prayer was ended, he opened the package which he carried in his hands, and took therefrom a Rose of Sharon and a Lily of the Valley, a Star of Bethle-

[1] John xiv. 2.

hem from near David's well, and a Bleeding Heart which grew near the cleft of the rock on Calvary. He had also an olive branch, which he had brought all the way from the isle of Patmos, and beautiful evergreens from the place of Elijah's altar on Mount Carmel.

When Judith had arranged these and other choice flowers into a bouquet of beautiful design, the aged apostle out of respect to that holy ground, removed his sandals from off his feet and entered into the cave to place this floral tribute upon the grave of the one he loved.

I followed him. And there I saw again the face of the spirit which so frightened me when first I entered into the Rabbi's home, when I was seated there in that lighted room, hewn out of the solid rock by the cave dwellers of prehistoric times. And from beyond that face, out of an inner chamber, I heard a voice calling unto me, and saying,

"Thy vision is ended, thy trance is over. Awake, O sleeper! for the longing of thy soul hath been satisfied."

And as I turned to see whence the voice came, I felt the weight of a masterly hand pressing heavily upon my soul. And a strange sensation coursed through all my veins and aroused my sleeping nerves. I looked up in astonishment and beheld the face of the Rabbi, the enchanter who put me to sleep. Then I realized that I was with the prophet again, in the cave of the wilderness of Judea, and that my long sleep was ended.

Conclusory

I

SECOND COMING OF ELIJAH AND CHRIST

"HAST thou seen the child-life of thy Lord?" the Rabbi asked, as I awoke from my long trance and sat up by his side.

"Yea, good master, I have seen a vision of the whole Messianic reign. Would that all the world could see what I have seen, then would every soul acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world! Permit me now, O thou prophet of the Most High God, to tell my dream to others. And wilt thou not tell me, Rabbi, what is thy name, and what the meaning of the little book which I saw in the hands of the angel, prophet, or priest, I know not which.

"Thy soul shall be satisfied, my son, if thou canst understand the language in which the prophets are commanded to speak. Thy knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, however perfect that may be, is not sufficient of itself to enable thee to know more than the alphabet of that universal language in which the Holy Spirit speaketh to the prophets, statesmen and saints throughout all ages, nations and climes.

"I am the one whom thou didst see in thy trance seven times. Every time thou sawest me, I was changed in my appearance. I have the power to represent whom I will. I represented Elijah the prophet, John the Baptist, the goodman-of-the-house, the angel of the Lord, a man in shining raiment. In thy trance, I went with thee whithersoever thou didst go. I whispered into thine ears and thou didst see the things I saw. And they are true.

"Hast thou never read what the Spirit said through John on the island of Patmos concerning the finishing of the mystery of God according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets?[1] The little book which thou sawest was the little book which that angel had in his hand, when he came to announce that the end of the world had come.[2] It is not lawful to utter the things that are written in that book.[3] They were written not for men, but for angels, and for the spirits of just men made perfect.

"I have the power to represent things in heaven or things on earth. But I am not an angel, neither am I an olive-tree or a candlestick, although I can represent either of them. I am one of the prophets like unto one of the two witnesses spoken of in the book of Revelation under the figure of an olive-tree and candlestick, standing before the Lord of the earth.[4]

"If thou wouldst identify me more particularly, then go thou and learn what the Spirit saith con-

[1] Rev. x. 7. [2] Rev. x. 2. [3] Rev. x. 4. [4] Rev. xi. 4.

cerning these two witnesses. Observe that these two witnesses are prophets[1] yet to appear in the earth, that when their enemies seek to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of the prophets' mouths and devoureth their enemies.[2] Rememberest thou any prophet of olden time who thus dealt with his enemies when King Ahaziah sent fifty men to take him?[3]

"Observe that these two witnesses have power to shut up the heavens that it rain not during the days of their prophecy.[4] And the days of their prophecy are two thousand two hundred and threescore, or about three years and six months.[5] Rememberest thou any prophet of olden time who had power to shut the heavens that it rained not for three years and six months?[6]

"The earth is a training school, in which the saints learn lessons for future service. Tell me what thou hast done in the earth and I will tell thee what thou shalt do hereafter.

"Elijah's work is not yet done, but only suspended. And his methods are not yet obsolete. I that speak unto thee am Elijah, the Tishbite. I am the one thou didst see in the cave of Machpelah. It is well for thee that thou didst not put forth thy hand to take that little book which I hid in the cleft of the rock. Hadst thou done so, thou wouldst have fallen into the dark abyss where thieves and murderers meet their eternal doom. None but honest men can ever under-

[1] Rev. xi. 3. [2] Rev. xi. 5. [3] 2 Kings i. 10.
[4] Rev. xi. 6. [5] Rev. xi. 3. [6] James v. 17.

stand or hope to enter into the secrets of their God. That book is the chart by which my life is directed. And in it is the program of the world, in which every generation hath a part until the great dramas and tragedies of human life are over. I am more than two thousand years old. And I have seen generation after generation come upon the stage and pass away to their reward. I have appeared upon the stage once, but I am held in reserve behind the curtains to appear again in the fullness of time. Then I also shall die. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.[1] And as none can enter heaven except through Christ, so can no one have salvation in Christ except he die as Adam.

"Dost thou wish to know the part that is assigned to me in God's plan for redeeming the world? It would profit thee more to perform thine own part well. Be not discouraged. As a pendulum swingeth to and fro, so there shall be bright eras and dark ages, progression and retrogression, times of peace and times of war, times of prosperity and times of distress. If it hath pleased God to call thee upon the stage of action when the day is dark and storms are threatening, fear not nor be thou dismayed. For God hath other servants besides thee. He will be pleased with thee if thou doest thy part well and leavest the rest to Him.

"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

again.[1] Mighty empires shall arise and fall, but the world shall rush on heedless of the divine commands until times of tribulation and distress shall come upon all the face of the earth to try the children of men. Wickedness shall prevail until, were it not for me, God would arise and smite the earth with a curse.[2] Then shall I be sent forth to prepare the way for the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord as, in spirit and power, I was sent in the person of John the Baptist to prepare the way for His first coming.

"Dost thou doubt whether Enoch and Elijah can change the face of the whole earth in three years? Go thou and read what the Spirit saith shall be the power of the two witnesses?[3] If we shall prevent the rain from falling anywhere upon the face of all the earth for three years and six months, thinkest thou the great kings of the earth will not come to bow down at our feet? If they make war against us, and fire out of our mouths devoureth their armies, thinkest thou they will attempt another campaign against us? If we shall have power to turn waters into blood and to smite the earth with every sort of plague as often as it pleaseth us, thinkest thou that all the allied nations of the world could conquer us? Because thou hast power to accomplish but little for thy Master, think not within thyself that the Master's cause is hopeless. The uniform which thou wearest signifieth that thou belongest to the infantry in the army of the Lord of hosts. But

[1] Matt. xxiv. 38. [2] Mal. iv. 6. [3] Rev. xi. 6.

forget thou not that He hath companies of cavalry and artillerymen by which He shall cause the earth to quake when the hour cometh for them to join in the conflict. Fear not, for the Lord shall surely triumph.

"When I return, I will have power to raise such of the dead as were beheaded for the testimony they bore, the faithful company of the martyrs and all who shall have part in the first resurrection.[1] I will place them upon thrones to rule throughout all the earth as my deputies.[2] And they shall reign with me as I shall reign with Christ. My coming will close the age of the Gentiles[3] and I will call the Jews and all the Israel of God to repentance. Jerusalem shall be rebuilt in splendor,[4] and this land which God promised to Abraham and his seed shall flow with milk and honey once again and shall blossom as the rose. I will bind the old Serpent which is the devil and Satan and I will drive him from the world.[5] I will restore all things.[6] Those who have part in this first resurrection shall reign with me a thousand years.[7] Then shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.[8]

"But when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed again for a season. And he shall go forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog to

[1] Rev. xx. 4, 5.
[2] Rev. xx. 6.
[3] Rev. xi. 2; Luke xxi. 24.
[4] Isa. lxvi. 20.
[5] Rev. xx. 2.
[6] Matt. xviii. 11.
[7] Rev. xx. 6.
[8] Isa. xi. 9; Hab. ii. 14.

gather them together in rebellion against me.[1] And he shall deceive the people and cause them to believe a lie and there shall be a great falling away.[2] And the nations shall make war against me and I shall be slain in the city of Jerusalem where my Lord was crucified.[3] Enoch also shall die with me. And our dead bodies shall lie in the street for men to look upon three days and a half.[4] Then again shall the breath of life enter into us and we shall stand up and the people shall be terrified.[5]

"Then shall a voice from heaven call us away. And we will go up to heaven in a cloud in the presence of our enemies.[6] And they who reigned with us shall be caught up from the earth likewise. Then shall there be such times as the world hath never seen. False Christs and false prophets shall arise and shall show signs and wonders that they may lead astray, if possible the elect.[7] And except the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake whom He chose, He shortened the days.[8]

"In those days the man of sin shall be revealed. And he will gather the nations together to the war against Jerusalem, the beloved city, the strong tower of the saints, the key to the conquest of the world. Then shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light,

[1] Rev. xx. 7, 8.
[2] 2 Thess. ii. 1–12.
[3] Rev. xi. 8.
[4] Rev. xi. 9.
[5] Rev. xi. 11.
[6] Rev. xi. 12.
[7] Matt. xxiv. 24.
[8] Matt. xxiv. 22.

and the stars shall be falling from heaven and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken.[1]

"Then suddenly as the lightning in the east shineth to the west,[2] they shall see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory.[3] And He shall have all His holy angels with Him.[4] And we, His ten thousand saints who have already ascended into heaven, will come with Him.[5] And the man of sin shall be destroyed by the brightness of His coming.[6] And all who were deceived, the kings of the earth, the princes and the chief captains shall call to the mountains and to the rocks to fall upon them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.[7]

"Then shall the sea give up its dead.[8] And all who are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth: they that have done good to the resurrection of life; they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.[9] And there shall be a new heaven and a new earth.[10]

"When thou didst see me with my eyes as flaming fire, I was reading of the man of sin making war with the saints in the great and final struggle. When thou didst see me with my eyes as soft as love, I had come to the end where Christ had triumphed over all His foes and put His last enemy under His feet.[11] And I smiled with joy when I saw Him crowned Lord of all.

[1] Matt. xxiv. 29. [2] Matt. xxiv. 27. [3] Matt. xxiv. 30.
[4] Matt. xxv. 31. [5] Jude 14. [6] 2 Thess ii. 8.
[7] Rev. vi. 15, 16. [8] Rev. xx. 13. [9] John v. 28.
[10] Rev. xxi. 1. [11] 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26.

"All prophecy hath a typical and a real fulfillment. John the Baptist was the type, but I am the reality. If thou wouldst know the child-life of thy Lord, if thou wouldst understand His ministry on earth, if thou wouldst learn of the manner of His coming in glory by and by, thou must study His words in the light of my life and character. For it hath pleased Him to appoint me to restore all things in the fullness of time before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."

As he said this, he lifted up his hands and blessed me. And under that benediction, I bowed my head to the ground. His melodious voice was as sweet music to my ears reaching to the very throne of God in the fullness of its inspired harmony as he pronounced his final word, "Amen."

II

A FORGOTTEN CREED

THE east window of my room was open, and through it the first real object that I saw in my waking moments, was the daystar rising over the mountains which were yet clothed in the dark shadows of night. I knew that I had been dreaming, that it was a long sweet dream and that the sudden ceasing of the imaginary prophet's voice had waked me. The memory of that indescribable something which started this train of thought in my mind and anointed my eyes to see marvellous visions as my soul went rushing on for centuries upon centuries through the rough mountain ranges of history and the beautiful, fertile plains of prophecy, summoned my wandering thoughts together to ponder the significance of this revelation.

I arose from my bed and went into my library to my study desk to examine the Scriptures in the light of my dream. And I found that the last words of the Old Testament are prophetic of Elijah's return. I reasoned that this prophecy either has been fulfilled or is yet to be fulfilled. If it has been fulfilled, either the world has not known of it or else it was fulfilled in John the Baptist.

John the Baptist declared that he was not the fulfillment of this prophecy. To suppose that he was mistaken about this matter, is to admit that he may have been mistaken about all other matters. Such a supposition strikes a blow at his inspiration and impeaches the value of his testimony to the divinity of Jesus.[1] John made this statement as a formal reply to the question put to him by a delegation officially representing the Jewish nation.[2] To suppose that he was mistaken in his official answer to an official delegation is unbelief in an aggravated form because it condemns John and justifies Israel in rejecting his testimony.

To suppose that John played upon the word Elijah is puerile. It was not a question as to whether he was Elijah in person. That official delegation must have been made up of intelligent Jews, and every intelligent Jew must have known that John was the son of their priest Zacharias and therefore that he was not Elijah in person. That vision which Zacharias had in the temple and those sensational events at the birth of John which were "noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea,"[3] could hardly have failed to identify John as the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth. They knew that he was not Elijah in person. The question in their minds was whether or not he was the fulfillment of that prophecy of Malachi. That was the question they asked him and that was the question he answered decisively by saying that he was the

[1] John i. 34. [2] John i. 19. [3] Luke i. 65.

fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah and not of Malachi.

The word of the Lord is represented to us as a sharp two-edged sword.[1] When Jesus spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, He spoke also of the end of the world in the same breath.[2] One was the type of the other. Likewise He alluded to His First Coming and His Second Coming in the same sentence.[3] He spoke of Himself as the Son of man and as the Son of God because His humanity and His divinity were the two edges of the same sword of truth. And in precisely the same manner, He spoke of John the Baptist and of Elijah.[4] The one was the image of the other.

As I meditated thus I turned to the fathers in the early church to see what the great heroes of faith have believed and taught. I looked to see what was the opinion of Justin Martyr. And I found that he believed that Elijah is yet to come. I consulted Tertullian and he said, "Elijah is to come again, not after a departure from life, but after a translation; not to be restored to the body, from which he was never taken; but to be restored to the world, from which he was translated; not by way of restoration to life, but for the completion of prophecy; one and the same in name and person." I enquired of Chrysostom and he said, "When Jesus saith that Elias cometh and shall restore all things, He means Elias him-

[1] Rev. i. 16.
[2] Matt. xxiv. 34.
[3] Matt. xvi. 28.
[4] Matt. xi. 14.

self, and the conversion of the Jews, which shall then be."

I found that the fathers in the early Church believed implicitly in the doctrine that Elijah is yet to come and that, in the time of Augustine, it was the universal belief. I therefore sought to ascertain when, where, and by whom was this doctrine ever disproved that it should fall into desuetude. For not one Christian in a thousand, to-day, seems to have ever heard of the doctrine. May it not be possible that those who are called pre-millennarians because they believe that Jesus will be partial to a portion of His saints and will come in person and raise His choice ones from the dead to reign with Him a thousand years on earth before the resurrection of the rest of the dead and the final judgment, have seen a vision of Elijah's return and have mistaken Elijah for Jesus? May it not be possible that the post-millennarians have found the doctrine of Elijah's future return inconsistent with their fundamental principles of evolution and so have failed to call attention to it until it has almost become a forgotten creed? Communing thus with myself I turned away from the early fathers to consult some modern expositors.

I laid my hand upon a volume written by Dr. Edward Pusey, the recognized head of the High-Church party in England unto the day of his death in 1882. And I found this statement: "Our Lord's words, Elias truly shall first come and restore all things, seem to me to leave no

question that, as St. John Baptist came, in the spirit and power of Elias, before His First Coming, so before the Second Coming, Elias should come in person, as Jews and Christians have alike expected. This has been the Christian expectation from the first."

I then turned to Dean Alford's Greek Testament, that repository of learning wherein the greatest biblical critic of 1850, A. D., expounded the Scriptures. In commenting upon Matt. xi. 13, he said, "Our Lord cannot be understood in either of these passages as meaning that the prophecy of Malachi iv. 5 received its full completion in John. For as in other prophecies so in this, we have a partial fulfillment both of the coming of the Lord and of His forerunner, while the great and complete fulfillment is yet future—at the great day of the Lord." In commenting upon Matt. xvii. 12, he said emphatically, "Our Lord speaks here plainly in the future and uses the very word of the prophecy Mal. iv. 6. The double allusion is only the assertion that the Elias (in spirit and in power) who foreran our Lord's first coming, was a partial fulfillment of the great prophecy which announces the real Elias (the words of Malachi will hardly bear any other than a personal meaning), who is to forerun His greater and second coming."

Having noted down these observations, I arose to meet the light of a new day resolved to tell my dream to others that they also might see how it is possible for our great Commander-in-chief

to have close at hand whole armies of troops yet undiscovered by either friend or foe. And it may be that in the fullness of time they will rush forth and take the world by storm. It is not the privilege of the private soldier to know all the details of the plans which his commander-in-chief has in mind. But the private soldier fights with more enthusiasm when he believes that the victory may be close at hand. That the victory may be nearer than we think and that it may come in a manner which we have not been accustomed to consider will be felt by every one who meditates upon God's word in the light of the suggestions of this dream. Therefore though the world may seem hard to conquer, and the progress of Christianity slow, let us take courage and quit ourselves like men in the part which the Captain of our salvation has assigned to us to do. For He has other sheep which are not of this fold, and other armies that are better than ours which may in due time appear on the battlefield and convert our slow progress into a quick and glorious victory.

THE END.

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